

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Report 2



Planning Ref No. 24/60787

Name of Applicant
Address of Development

Herbata Limited.
Townlands of Halverstown, Jigginstown and Newhall, Naas, Co. Kildare

Development

The demolition of 3 no. dwelling houses, associated garages and farm outbuildings / agricultural buildings (total floor area 1,591m²); The construction of 6 no. two storey data centre buildings, each with loading bays, external plant area including electrical and mechanical plant rooms, fuel compound, sprinkler tanks and associated ancillary development.

Type of Permission
Date Inspected
Due Date

Permission
19/09/2024 and 16/07/2025 (*sig FI notices*)
20/08/2025

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Permission is sought for The demolition of 3 no. dwelling houses, associated garages and farm outbuildings / agricultural buildings (total floor area 1,591m²); The construction of 6 no. two storey data centre buildings, each with loading bays, external plant area including electrical and mechanical plant rooms, fuel compound, sprinkler tanks and associated ancillary development; Data centre building Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 will consist of: a data hall (24,756m², overall height 19m), an administration block (2,505m² overall height 15m) and include an external screened plant area of 18m in height and 6,164m²; Gas turbines, gas engine and battery energy storage systems will be provided within each plant area; Data centre building No. 5 will consist of: a data hall (24,756m², overall height 19m), an administration block (2,505m² overall height 15m) and include an external screened plant area of 18m in height and 6,375m² in area and includes infrastructure for district heating; Gas turbines, gas engine and battery energy storage systems will be provided within the plant area; Adjacent to each data centre building will be a screened sprinkler tank compound (408m² to 528 m² in area) comprising of 3 no. above ground sprinkler pump containers, (1 no. 240m³ and 2 no. 268.8m³ containers) and a screened fuel compound (331m²

in area) comprising 1 no. 38m³ fuel pump container and 6 no. 64m³ tanks; and Solar panels with a total area of 3,600m² will be provided on the roof of each data centre building and rainwater harvesting is included in the development. The proposed development of the Data Centre also comprises: A screened Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) compound (61m² in area) with 1 no. kiosk (3m in height and 19.5m² in area) with a biomethane gas injection point; A screened above Ground Installation (AGI) compound (1,753m² in area) with 4 no. kiosks each of 3m in height and 51.5 m² in area; A district heating building (5m in height and 341m² in area) district heating plant and in ground piping for district heating system; Security hub building (4.1m in height and 42m² in area) at main entrance to the proposed development; A single storey admin workshop/office (504m² in area) and water treatment plant (315m² in area) building (4.8m in height) and associated hydrant pump room (5m in height and 80m² in area) and 2 no. hydrant pump room storage tanks (5m in height and c.251m³ in area); A new access/egress from the R409 and a new emergency access/egress from the L2030 via the M7 Business Park and including a bridge over Bluebell stream; A cycle path and footpath along the south side of the R409 along the length of the campus site's road frontage and extending east to existing cycle and pedestrian facilities; A bus stop on the R409; Construction of a temporary construction access off R409 and temporary construction compound within the boundary of the site; and Ancillary site development works that will include swales, detention & attenuation ponds and the installation of pipes and connections to the public water supply, foul and storm water drainage networks, and the installation of utilities; Other ancillary site development works will include hard and soft landscaping, including removal of existing hedgerows, planted mounding, lighting, fencing (max 2.4m)/integrated boundary treatments, bat houses, smoking shelters, signage, central services road and internal access roads, loading bays, gates, 210 no. car parking spaces and 104 no. bicycle parking spaces; The development will be integrated into the surrounding landscape and native woodland planting to all frontages, including a 30-40m landscaped buffer along the M7.

Planning permission is sought for a period of 10 years. This application to Kildare County Council relates to a development for the purposes of an activity requiring an industrial omissions licence. The proposed development the subject of this application to Kildare County Council, is part of a wider Project (for Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening purposes). The Project comprises two main elements, namely: (a) The Data Centre as described above which forms the planning application being submitted to Kildare County Council; and (b) A Substation which will comprise of a new 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) grid substation, the undergrounding of an existing 110kV transmission line; 2 no. dropdown towers, internal road layout, fencing, and utilities, along with associated and ancillary works. The Substation will be the subject of a separate application for approval to An Bord Pleanála under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been prepared in respect of the overall Project, comprising both the Substation and the Data Centre, and

will be submitted to Kildare County Council with this application at Halverstown, Jigginstown and Newhall, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Revised by **Significant Further Information** comprising amendments to data centre building no. 4, which results in reducing the floor area of the associated data hall from 24,756m² to 13,683m², the external plant area to 6,065m² and the solar panel area to 1,800m², provision of 17 no. combined cycle gas turbines to replace 26 no. open cycle gas turbines and all associated works including services, compounds and water storage units, minor modification of locations of the proposed fuel compounds and sprinkler tank compounds, minor amendments to the proposed cycle path, footpath and bus stop on the R409, provision of mammal passes in fencing, and all associated ancillary site development works. An addendum to the EIAR and Natura Impact Statement is submitted with the application.

2.0 SITE LOCATION/CONTEXT

The proposed development is located approximately 2.5km-3km west of Naas town centre on lands located to the south of the R409 Regional Road (Caragh Road). The site is bounded to the north by the R409 Regional Road to the south-east by M7 Business Park, to the east by the M7 Motorway and to the west and south-west by lands in agricultural use. The site has a significant frontage approximately 700m along the Caragh Road R409 and also comprises 3 no. dwellings, each with independent frontage onto the R409. A number of farm buildings are located in the centre of the lands c.250m from the road front, with access via an agricultural gate at the R409. Current access to the lands appears to be via the R409 only. The site comprises a number of individual fields (approximately 11 in total), each separated by hedgerows, marking the field boundaries. The overall site is bounded on all sides by existing vegetation. The overall site is generally flat, with the land level sloping gently downwards from north to south.

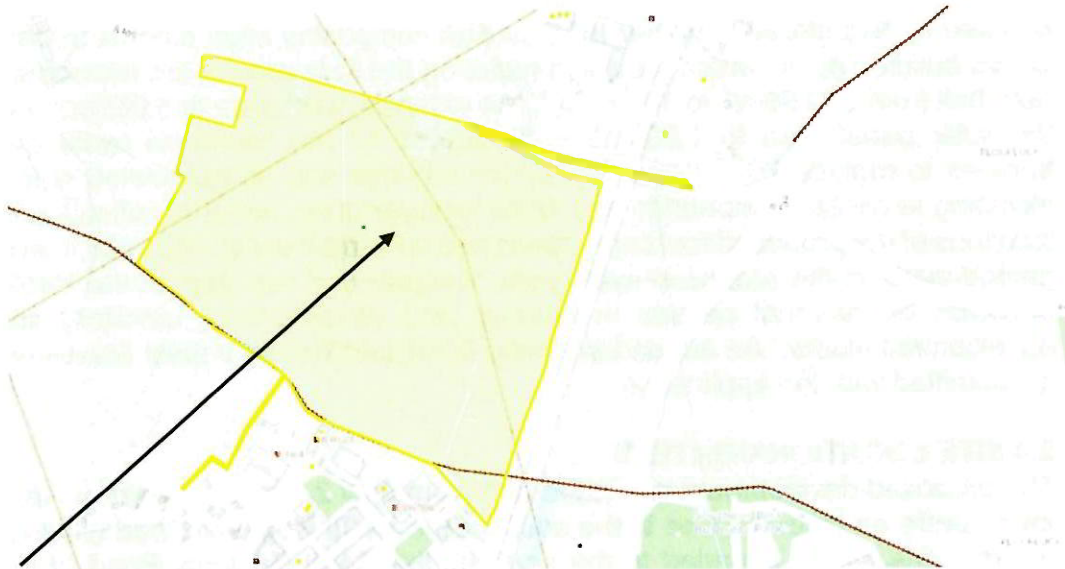
The Yeomanstown Stream (referred in the application as The Bluebell Stream but as Yeomanstown on KCC GIS) runs in a westerly direction along the southern boundary of the site and also traverses the site at the south eastern corner. The stream would appear to mark much of the boundary between the site and the industrial development to the south at M7 Business Park. This boundary is also marked by existing vegetation.

The site is traversed by both 110kV and 220kV overhead electricity lines and also by three phase overhead electricity lines.

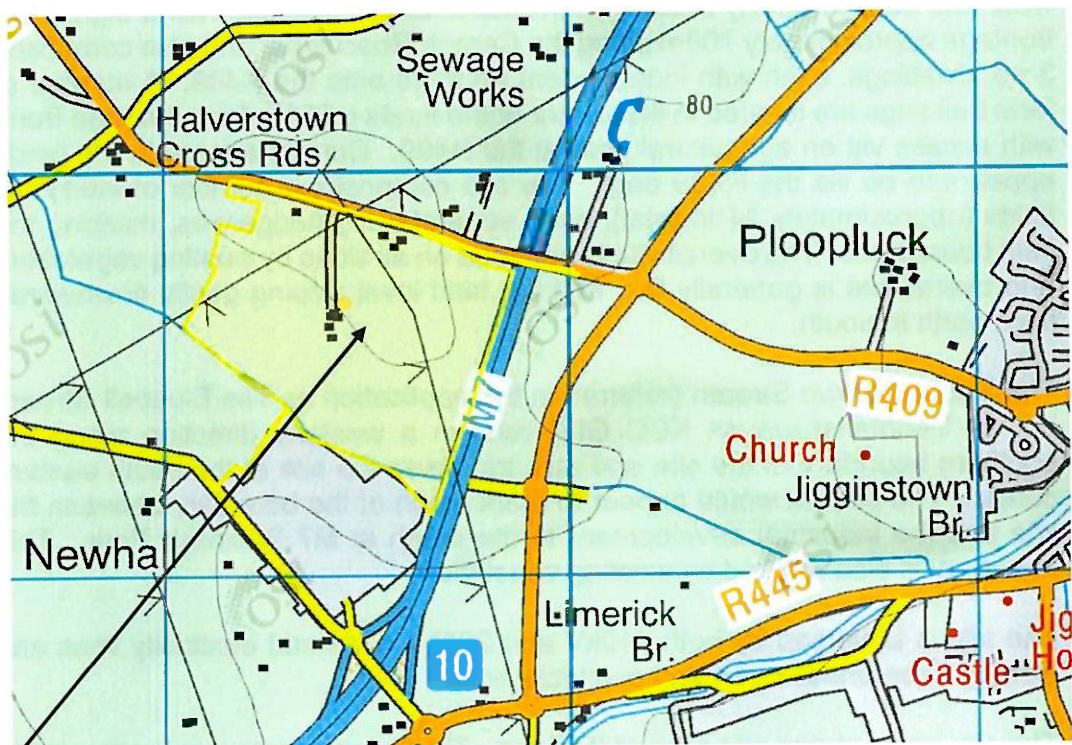
The site has a stated site area of 37.51ha. There is a variation in levels across the site (approximately 6m) with higher levels towards the north and lower levels to the south.

The character of the area is a mix of industrial and agricultural land uses with a number of rural houses located to west of the site and 1 no. rural house located opposite the site to the north of the R409.

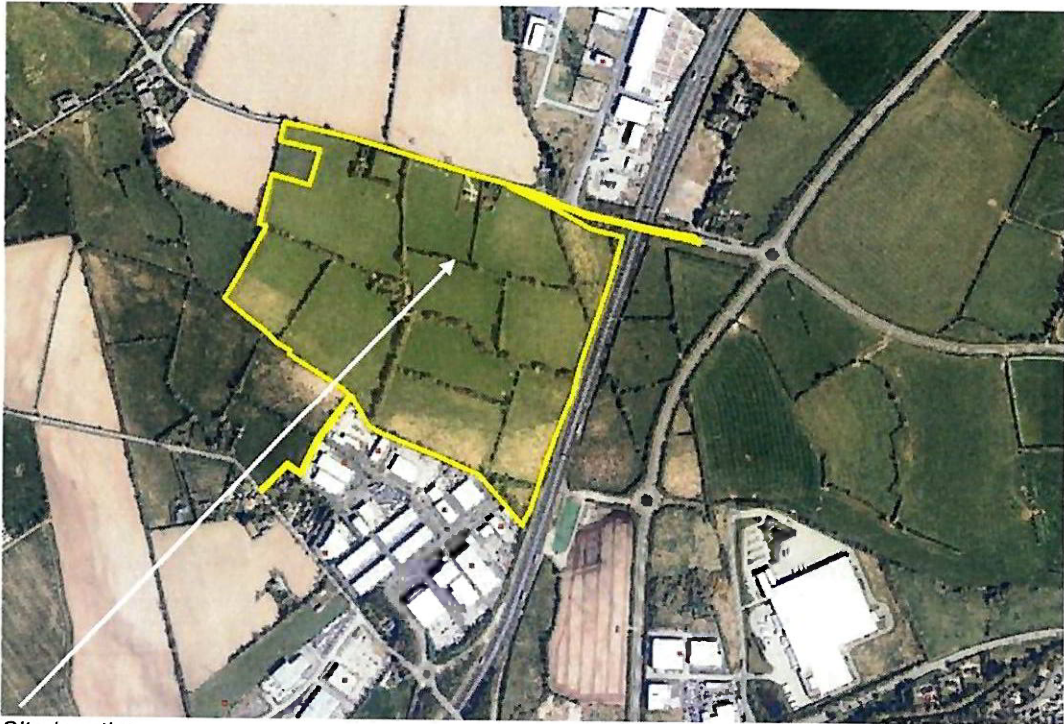
The site is located at the edge of the boundary of the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 on lands zoned P – Data Centre.



Site location



Site location



Site location

KCC GIS Blue Sky Aerial Photo.



Site location

Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 Boundary



Site frontage along R409 view from north east looking westwards



Frontage of site – viewed from west to east along R409



View of site (proposed emergency access) via M7 Business Park

3.0 FURTHER INFORMATION d

On 04/10/2024, the Planning Authority sought the following Further Information:

Note: - the applicant sought and was granted an extension of time for the submission of the response to Further Information. The further information response was received on 23/06/2025.

1. Policy RE P12 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 seeks to ensure that economic and enterprise related development is provided in a manner which facilitates a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and accelerates the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy. Furthermore, Policy RE P11 and Policy EC P18 seeks to support the accommodation of Data Centres at appropriate locations in line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework and the principles for Sustainable Data Centre Development of the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy (July 2022) subject to appropriate Transport, Energy and Environmental Assessments and all relevant planning conditions.

The Data Centre development as proposed would result in the emission of 28.6 million tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) during its lifetime which represents c. 49.35% of the Sectoral Emissions Ceiling for the entire Commercial Built Environment Sector to 2030. This level of emission is considered to be excessive for one development and would have wider implications for the sector to remain within its emission ceiling, with a consequent negative impact on climate change. The proposed development, as proposed, would run counter to the provisions of National Policy as set out in Ireland's Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 and in the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's

Enterprise Strategy 2022, both of which require decarbonisation through emissions reduction/removal and design. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy RE P12, RE P11 and EC P18 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, would set an undesirable precedent for similar developments of this nature and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The Applicant is requested to comment.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits a detailed response to the matters raised. The response is presented under a number of headings, a summary of which is included below.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The applicant presents an explanation for the figures indicated in the EIAR that accompanied the application and indicates that the 28.6 million tCO₂e set out in the EIAR were based on a "Worst Case Scenario" and also based on a lifetime of 50 years. A revised lifetime of 20 years would result in 11.6 million tCO₂e. It is also submitted that the direct emissions from the operation of the data centre presented in the EIAR assumed no decarbonisation of the gas network and presented a conservative worst case scenario assessment of operational direct emissions, unlikely to reflect the actual and likely emissions arising from the development. With regard to indirect emissions, the applicant indicates that the EIAR assumed the highest possible embodied carbon in the production of the servers and the highest frequency of server replacement, to present a conservative assessment. It is submitted that the data submitted in the EIAR did not take into account, the obligations of the tenants of data centres under the Carbon Neutral Data Centre Pact, which will lead to a reduction in the likely embodied carbon arising from the manufacture of servers.

The applicant presents revised Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) figures and concludes that the whole of life effects of the GHG emissions is aligned with net zero targets and are indicated to be "minor adverse" for climate and is not significant in terms of environmental impact.

It is submitted that the now likely emissions scenario for the direct operational emissions relative to the EIAR worst case scenario is an 85% reduction in emissions. The now likely emissions scenario for the indirect emissions from embodied carbon in the servers, relative to the EIAR worst case scenario is a 62% reduction in emissions. A further reduction in emissions of 39% is achieved when a lifespan of 20 years is applied.

It is submitted that an overall net reduction in emissions of 84% is achieved when compared to the original figures presented in the EIAR.

It is submitted that the reduced operational emissions equate to 1.78% of the relevant sectoral emissions ceiling and not 49.3% as previously indicated in the EIAR and in the request for Further Information.

The applicant submits that there are a number of factors contributing to the revised emissions including phasing, ramping up of loading, operational

demand at less than 100% power usage, use of increased renewable energy via Corporate Power Purchase Agreements (CPPAs) at 50% of the energy requirements, gas supply via biomethane and hydrogen. Revisions also propose to include 22 no. Open Cycle Gas Turbine types and 17 no. Combined Cycle Gas Turbine types to improve the efficiency of the electricity generated on site from approximately 30.8% to approximately 45%. It is submitted that approximately 31.6% less gas will be required for the operation of the facility.

The applicant presents details of emissions pertaining to a number of permitted data centre developments throughout Ireland, including Kildare Innovation Campus Ref 23/60047 and submits that the magnitude of emissions arising from the proposed development is significantly less than the magnitude of the impacts arising from these consented schemes.

Sectoral Emissions Ceilings

The applicant submits that following a review, it is concluded that the Commercial Built Environment Sector which includes residential, public and commercial sectors with emissions relating to space and water heating of such buildings, is not the correct sector to compare carbon emissions arising from the energy demand for data centres. It is submitted that the Electricity Sectoral Emission Ceiling is the appropriate sector. A rationale for this is submitted.

It is submitted that the proposal now represents 1.78% of the emissions ceiling and this is not considered significant.

Compliance with National Policy/Local Policy

The applicant submits that the proposal is in compliance with the National Planning Framework (first revision); National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030; Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy with regard to renewable energy and decarbonisation. It is submitted that the proposal will be connected to the electricity grid and will be mainly powered by renewable energy sources and not fossil fuel generation and is not considered an "islanded" data centre.

It is submitted that the proposal accords with the Kildare County Development Plan vis a vis Policy REP12 with regard to renewable energy sources of power at min 50% renewable energy via on site solar PV and CPPAs with new solar and wind energy projects, district heating, digital economy, mobility management and landscaping and Policy REP11 and EC P18 regarding support for and appropriate locations for data centres and the land use zoning P (1) Data Centre as set out in the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027.

2. The proposed development relies heavily on the supply of gas from the national network to fuel the gas turbines to generate the electricity to power the development. There is currently no gas supply infrastructure available to serve the site. The development is thus wholly reliant on the separate provision of a Gas Networks Infrastructure upgrade including the construction of a high-pressure gas pipeline to the site, that must be undertaken under a separate process, by the relevant Statutory Undertaker. No such works have been undertaken or appear to be planned or approved. It is considered that there is a deficiency in the availability of the necessary infrastructure to serve the development and, in this regard, the development, as proposed, is considered to be premature and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The Applicant is requested to comment.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits a rationale for the development to be permitted in advance of gas network improvement and submits examples of other developments where permission was granted for data centres.

The applicant also submits that there has been consultation with Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) and has submitted a formal natural gas connection application and the application remains live. A letter from GNI is submitted, acknowledging the application for gas connection and also indicating, based on a modelling exercise that there is sufficient capacity in the transmission network to accommodate the forecasted demands of the development and that a preliminary high level connection solution has been identified. The letter indicates that it is common for Large Network Connection Agreements to be signed and then for works on gas pipeline infrastructure to be progressed by GNI after planning permission has been applied for (but not necessarily obtained) in respect of the relevant facility that is connecting to the transmission network. A separate consent process is required for GNI to upgrade the network.

The applicant also submits a detailed Legal Opinion regarding the proposed data centre, provision of gas infrastructure and matters regarding prematurity under the Planning and Development Act, concluding that the development can proceed by separate steps, without being deemed to be premature.

3. Natural gas is a fossil fuel. The energy supply to serve the proposed development, as proposed, is largely fossil fuel driven. Notwithstanding the national target of decarbonising gas supply by 2050 and to produce 5.7TWh of biomethane by 2030, it is considered that the volume of biomethane required to serve the fully operational proposal would be c.50% of the national target which is considered to be unsustainable. The proposed gas fueled electricity generation will allow the proposed data centre to be an independent Operator, outside of the National Grid and, to this end, it is an example of an "islanded" Data Centre, not connected to the grid and powered mainly by on site fossil fuel generation. Such developments as identified in the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Irelands Enterprise Strategy 2022, run counter to emissions reduction objectives and would not serve the wider efficiency and decarbonisation of our energy system and could result in the security of supply risk being transferred from electricity to gas supply, which would be a significant challenge given Ireland's reliance on gas importation.

In this regard, having regard to the lack of significant on site renewable energy to power the development, the reliance on gas powered turbines to provide energy to the development and the lack of detailed evidence for Corporate Power Purchase Agreements, the proposed "islanded" Data Centre would be contrary to the provisions of Policy RE P11 and EC P 18 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 which support the accommodation of Data Centres in line with, *inter alia*, the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Irelands Enterprise Strategy 2022, would set a precedent for similar proposals of this nature and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The Applicant is requested to comment.

Applicant's Response

Energy supply

The applicant submits that the proposal will commit to a minimum of 50% of its energy sourced from carbon free renewable energy production. The applicant indicates that it is willing to accept a condition requiring the necessary CPPAs are secured prior to the operational stage of the development. The applicant indicated that it would enter into CPPAs with new, additional renewable generators gradually over a period of 8 years, sourcing 21MW of wind energy and 42MW of solar energy over that period up to a maximum of 168MW of wind energy and 336MW of solar energy. It is submitted that the mix of energy source types is deliberate in order to achieve overlap between the sources and to target as close as possible a 24/7 coverage.

The remaining energy requirements will be met by the use of the proposed gas turbines. The applicant acknowledges that the volume of biomethane production in Ireland is quite low and growth will be slow, however, reference is made to Ireland's National Biomethane Strategy that forecasts a cumulative consumption of 5.7TWh of biomethane, of which the applicant proposes to use 0.17TWh, representing 3% of the national biomethane target. The applicant indicates that it is committed to including a biomethane injection point on site to allow local biomethane producers to inject their gas to the local network. An agreement similar to a CPPA will be used. A letter from a biomethane supplier is submitted offering support to the applicant via biomethane supply.

The Gas Networks Ireland letter submitted with the response also states that the gas network will play an important role in Ireland's transition to net-zero by 2050, seeking to fully decarbonise the network by 2045. It is submitted that the connection of data centres to the gas network would allow such data centres to support the development of indigenous biomethane production. As domestic biomethane and hydrogen industries develop, dependence on imported natural gas will fall, improving the security of the national energy supply and contributing to the decarbonisation of the overall energy system.

Grid Connection / Islanded Data Centre

It is submitted that the proposed data centre will be connected to the national electricity grid and is not an islanded development. The proposed grid substation, subject to a separate Strategic Infrastructure consent procedure is for the purpose of allowing renewable energy to be sourced within Ireland and supplied via CPPAs, allowing on site generation to be used to support the grid with the site being connected as an auto-producer in line with Large Energy

User (LEU) Connection policy and allowing the on site battery energy storage (BESS) to be used a frequency stabilisation to support the grid. The applicant submits that connection to the grid is a fundamental part of the project and the site will not be an islanded site.

The applicant submits that CPPAs for renewable electricity supply via the grid is the only available option and there is no policy to facilitate direct lines or private wires from renewable assets to consumers.

The applicant submits that a condition be attached to a grant of permission requiring the CPPAs to be entered into in advance of the proposed development becoming operational – a suggested wording is submitted.

It is submitted that the imposition of the condition would mean it would not be possible for the data centre to operate in the absence of a connection to the electricity grid and that at least 50% of the energy demand of the facility would be met by renewable resources.

Further detail regarding CPPAs is submitted. It is submitted that CPPAs have contributed significantly to the growth of renewable generation in Ireland, and data centres have played a large role in that growth as one of the key groups of off-takers under such agreements. It has been estimated that over 20 no. CPPAs have been completed to date in Ireland, the majority of these with data centres.

The applicant reiterates that the proposal is in accordance with Policy RE P11 and EC P18 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

The applicant submits that the proposed energy supply is not fossil fuel driven. It is submitted that from the commencement of the operation, a minimum 50% of the energy will be supplied from renewables through CPPAs and onsite generation and it is projected by 2039 the proposed data centre would operate at Net Zero Carbon.

4. Policy RE P 11 and EC P 18 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 requires that the location of Data Centres shall be situated where they will not have a potential likely significant effect on a European Site. Such developments shall be subject to an AA Screening Report, and where applicable, Stage 2 AA. They shall have regard for any hydrological connection shared with a European Site and shall account for any potential likely significant effects and provide mitigation and monitoring where appropriate. The proposed Data Centre has hydrological connections to European Sites including South Dublin Bay, North Dublin Bay, River Tolka Estuary, North Bull Island and North West Irish Sea via the Bluebell Stream. Based on the information received with the application, the Planning Authority is not satisfied, having regard to the scale of the proposed development, that the impact on the integrity of the European Sites can be screened out.

The Applicant is requested to conduct a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the proposed development and submit a Natura Impact Statement accordingly.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The NIS concludes that subject to the effective implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, the proposed development will not adversely affect (either directly or

indirectly) the integrity of any European site in view of sites' conservation objectives, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

5. The Applicant is requested to submit revised Visual Impact Assessment to include views of the development from the east and north east of the site, to include views from (1) the dwelling house immediately north east of the site, (2) the Osberstown Business Park, (3) the motorway bridge over the M7 at Caragh Road (4) the houses located north of the R409 at Caragh Road Roundabout (5) the Southern Link Road from R445 to R409 and (6) the M7 motorway east of the site.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits additional verified views, and these are factored into the EIAR – Chapter 11 landscape and visual. It is submitted that the impacts identified at construction and operational stage are minor to negligible.

It is also submitted that the revision to Data Centre Building 4 has also been taken into account and amended views are submitted from Millennium Park Road, R409 Motorway Bridge and Osberstown Business Park entrance.

6. The proliferation of palisade fencing throughout the site is noted. Notwithstanding the security rationale for the proposed fencing, the applicant is advised, having regard to the scale of the proposal, that there is insufficient consideration given to the passage of wildlife through the site and this should be facilitated by appropriate fencing. The Applicant is requested to revise the proposed fencing arrangement on site to allow for wildlife access and passage through the site. An addendum to the Ecological Impact Statement shall accompany the revised fencing proposals.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits revised details regarding fencing across the site including the provision of mammal passes. It is submitted that the number, location and dimensions of the mammal passes proposed was established following engagement between the project ecology and landscape team. Proposed mammal passes will comprise a gap at the foot of the security fencing 500mm wide x 200mm high, that the applicant indicates to be sufficient for all mammal species. There are no proposed changes to the height, materials or layout of the proposed fencing.

An addendum to Chapter 5 of the EIAR is submitted.

7. The Applicant is requested to submit details to confirm that the proposed works occurring over, under or adjacent to the motorway within the MMarC (Motorway Maintenance and Renewal Contract) area have been addressed appropriately and that the proposed works adjacent to the M7 such as landscaping and drainage and lines associated works such as earth moving and lighting have been designed and constructed in a manner that has regard to the extents and function of the motorway.

Applicants Response

The applicant submits that the proposed development includes both (i) works adjacent to, but not within, the MMarC area, and (ii) works along the R409 Caragh Road, which crosses over the M7 motorway on an overbridge, and which will be above, but not within the MMarC area.

The applicant submits that there are no buildings or internal roads (including lighting) proposed within 51m of the MMarC area. It is also submitted that within the site of the proposed development, a 6m buffer of undisturbed ground has been provided and no earthworks are proposed within 6m of the site boundary/MMaRC area. The works adjacent to this buffer comprise earth moving to form landscaped mounds, landscape planting and associated land drainage at the toe of the mounds, with discharge provided to existing ditches internal to the development site.

The applicant submits that it is satisfied, having provided an appropriate site design, including separation of building and roads from the MMarC and an undisturbed buffer from the boundary of the MMarC area, that the proposed works adjacent to the M7 (i) have been designed and (ii) will be constructed in a manner that has regard to the extents and function of the motorway.

The applicant also indicates that works to Caragh Road R409 including a footpath and cycle path traverses the M7 motorway on an overbridge and these works are over but not within the MMarC Area. The applicant submits that these works will be undertaken with engagement of relevant stakeholders, prior to construction.

8. The Applicant is requested to confirm the extent of the works within the MMarC Area.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits that, with the exception of the VRU improvement works to the R409, there are no other works situated within the MMarC area along the M7 boundary. The applicant provides a buffer of 6m between the site boundary (fence line) and the proposed development works, which are landscaped berms and associated localised toe drainage. The VRU improvement works, consisting of surfacing alterations to provide a footpath and associated line markings, will be undertaken on the R409, in an area over the M7 motorway, within the MMarC Area.

9. The Applicant is requested to submit details of the Works Specific Deeds of Indemnities, arrangements for third party access or consent from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in accordance with Section 53 of the Roads Act, 1993 which a third party seeking to undertake works within a motorway/dual carriageway will generally be required to carry out as advised by TII.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits that it has engaged with TII and undertakes that, if granted planning permission and prior to the commencement of the works, a submission will be made to KCC and TII to put in place and agree all required Works Specific Deeds of Indemnities, and any necessary consents required for surfacing alterations to provide a footpath and associated line on the R409 overbridge which crosses over the M7 motorway.

The applicant submits that Section 53 of the 1993 Act does not apply to the construction of the proposed development, including the proposed works on the R409 on foot of a grant of planning permission.

10. The Applicant is requested to submit details to highlight compliance with the Technical Acceptance Requirements for the assessment, alteration, modification, strengthening and repair of all road structures which must be prepared in accordance with the Technical Approval of Road Structures on Motorways and Other National Roads for structures' (TII, 2009, DN-STR03001). This is to ensure that the current application demonstrates protection of the safety, maintenance and operation of the heavily trafficked M7 at this location and to confirm the technical feasibility of the proposal having regard to TII Publications requirements as appropriate.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits that the changes proposed for the overbridge KE-M07-031.00 as part of the Herbata Data Centre Campus project will not adversely impact its structural integrity, maintenance, durability, safety or operation of the M7 motorway. It is submitted that materials used in the proposal will be compliant with TII standards and compatible with original construction. It is submitted that the bridge parapet is sufficient and that safety barriers will need to be replaced with new vehicle restraint systems.

The applicant submits that there are minor alterations proposed to the new bus stop on the R409, minor alterations to the site entrance off the R409 and minor alterations to existing gully locations on both sides of the bridge.

The applicant confirms that prior to the commencement of any works, the applicant will agree to incorporate all technical recommendations of TII and Kildare County Council NRO Office arising from the technical submission on the geometric departures.

11. The Applicant is requested to submit details to resolve the following operational issues related to the proposed development as part of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to address concerns relating to national road network maintenance and road safety.

(a) Consultation with all relevant PPP Companies, MMarC Contractors and the MDO over which the haul route traverses to ascertain any operational requirements such as delivery timetabling, etc. and to ensure that the strategic function of the national road network is maintained.

(b) Any proposed works to the national road network, including signage, to facilitate construction traffic to comply with TII Publications and to be subject to Road Safety Audit as appropriate. Works should ensure the ongoing safety for all road users and prior to any development necessary licenses, approvals or agreements with PPP Concessions, Motorway Maintenance and Renewal Contracts (MMaRC) Companies and the MDO, as necessary, to be in place.

(c) All proposals agreed between the MDO/ KCC, PPP Concessions and MMarC Companies and the Applicant impacting on national roads with mitigation measures identified by the Applicant.

(d) Measures to rectify any damage caused to the pavement of the existing national road due to the turning movement of abnormal 'length' loads (e.g. tearing of the surface course) to be in accordance with TII Pavement Standards and details in this regard to be agreed with the MDO.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits a revised Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) addressing concerns with regard to national road network maintenance and road safety. An updated CTMP will be finalised prior to commencement of construction, incorporating relevant planning conditions.

The applicant submits an addendum to Chapter 12 of the EIAR with regard traffic and transportation.

The Applicant is advised that there are a number of concerns regarding the details contained within the Fire Hazard Analysis Report received with the application.

12. Page 10 – The reference to UL 2775 indicates that the BESS will be protected with an aerosol suppression system, consistent with later portions of the report. Aerosol systems can extinguish such a fire but will not stop thermal runaway or off-gassing if the cells are damaged. Gas detection and possibly venting should be provided.

13. Page 27 – While NFPA 855 (National Fire Protection Association (USA) recommends gas detection when aerosol suppression systems are used, the report indicates that gas detection is not necessary. This should be addressed.

14. Page 28 – The report indicates that testing was done to UL 9540A. Measurable gas concentrations for certain gases were identified but the concentrations were not provided. A copy of the UL9540A test report should be provided for review. The lack of gas concentration data also does not allow an evaluation on the need for explosion protection and a toxicology evaluation.

15. In accordance with NFPA 855, aerosol suppression systems are only permitted if based on reports issued as a result of large-scale fire and explosion testing. No such report has been provided to support this.

16. The test report referenced above shall be accompanied by a supplemental report by a fire protection engineer providing interpretation of the test data in relation to the installation requirements. No such report has been provided.

17. Page 30 – The aggregate capacity of the BESS is identified as greater than 72 MJ. However, additional details have not been provided such as: manufacturer's specifications, ratings, and listings of the ESS, quantities and types of ESS units.

18. ESSs shall be comprised of groups with a maximum stored energy of 50 kWh each with a minimum separation between groups of 0.9m, unless larger groups or smaller spacing is based on fire and explosion testing. Again, no such fire test report has been provided.

19. Page 35 – Detailed design criteria for the detection, alarm, and suppression systems is not provided. References are made to "agreed cause and effect matrix," and sprinkler design "appropriate for the use in question." Clarification required.

20. Page 38 – Maintenance of the fire protection systems for the BESS and the buildings is not addressed.

21. Index 1 – The HMA indicates that sprinklers are provided external to the cabinets but no sprinkler design criteria is provided other than "appropriate for the data centre use." Clarification required.

22. The toxicology analysis provided in Appendix 9 is generic and incomplete. Although referring to water suppression, the data sheet indicates that hydrogen can form an explosive mixture. Section 11 (Toxicological Information) indicates that most information is "not available."

23. The Local Effect and Effect on System are very generic. For example, the Local Effect often indicates a fast rise in temperature and the associated Effect on System is to disconnect the ESS. Many of these features are required because NFPA 855 assumes an uncontrolled event occurred. If the protection feature fails during an uncontrolled event, what is the consequence of such an occurrence? This is not considered a dual fault condition.

24. It is acknowledged that the aggregate capacity will exceed 72 MJ and therefore NFPA 855 applies. However, that does not provide the actual aggregate capacity information, as required by NFPA 855.

Applicant's Response (Items 12-24 inclusive)

The applicant submits an updated Fire Hazard Analysis Report including appendices to address the technical matters raised.

25. Given the scale and location of the development site, it is possible that previously unrecorded sub-surface archaeological remains could be disturbed during the course of groundworks required for the development. The extensive area of archaeological significance identified through geophysical survey within Field No. 8 is considered to represent a new archaeological monument and preservation in situ should be the first and preferred first option. In accordance with Section 3.4 of Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999), the Applicant is requested to conduct a comprehensive interrogation of design options to determine the feasibility of facilitating preservation in situ of this monument and submit a detailed report detailing the results of an assessment of all design options.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits proposed revisions to Data Centre Building 4 in order to enable the preservation in situ of the monument – previously unrecorded sub surface archaeological remains (Enclosure). The redesign also includes a 10m buffer from the outer edge of the enclosure. It is submitted that the enclosure has no surface expression and there will be no visual impact on its setting.

It is submitted that the design changes to DCB 4 represent the optimal layout to retain the operational viability of the data centre. A revised floor area of 16,188 sq m is proposed, with no changes to heights, car/bicycle parking provision and smoking shelter size.

The revisions have resulted in a revised site layout plan including revisions to the internal road network, services and landscaping.

An addendum to Chapter 10 of the EIAR is submitted – Cultural Heritage. The revisions are also included in addendum to Chapter 9 Noise and Vibration and Chapter 11 Landscape and Visual and in the Natura Impact Statement.

26. There is a query in relation to the figures pertaining to the estimation of the greenfield runoff rate at 6 l/s/ha. The Applicant is requested to reissue the design with a revised Qbar rate and confirm that the available attenuation storage for the site provided in the proposed ponds and basins on the site layout plan have sufficient capacity to store the increased water volumes associated with the reduced Qbar rates.

27. The Applicant is requested to reissue the Proposed SuDS Detail drawings highlighting the correct Qbar rate at each of the outfalls.

28. In the flood risk assessment issued for the site, it is noted that the design of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems at the proposed site are introduced to deal with potential pluvial flooding that has the potential to occur based on increase in hard surfacing at the site. In line with Item 1 above, the Applicant is to review the Flood Risk Assessment to ensure that any increase in water volumes that are generated by the reduction in Qbar rate, are adequately assessed to ensure that there is adequate capacity in the proposed network so that no additional residual risks are generated on the site and downstream of the site.

Applicant's Response (Items 26-28 inclusive)

The applicant submits an Updated Planning Engineering Report including details of revised discharge rate, updated surface water analysis calculations.

A revised proposed surface water drainage drawing is submitted indicating the amended Qbar discharge rates.

The applicant submits that the information, data, figures and conclusions set out in the SSFRA submitted with the application for planning permission have not changed on the basis of the revised Qbar figures. It is submitted that the previously submitted SSFRA, which concluded that the site is located wholly within Flood Zone C where the probability of flooding is less than 0.1% (1 in 1000 years) and that the proposed development will not result in an increased risk of flooding within or downstream of the site, is still applicable and valid.

29. The Landscape Design Rationale & Landscape Proposal prepared by the qualified Landscape Architect (or qualified Landscape Designer) should be amended to include additional planting and screening and the retention of existing trees and hedge rows.

The following shall be included to support this;

- A scaled Landscape Masterplan with cross-sections (where appropriate) showing the general layout and hard and soft landscape treatment of all external areas/spaces boundaries, structures, and features. This shall be generally provided at a maximum scale of 1/200.
- Details of Hard Landscape Design (where applicable) for boundaries, (walls, fences, screens), lighting, seating, kerbing, edging, surfacing.
- Details of Soft Landscape Design: detailed Planting Plan(s) and Planting Schedule(s) [species/varieties, quantities, sizes, rootball presentation, spacings]. Proposed planting should have a wide variety of species/varieties, using both native planting and non-native planting. The overall objective of planting in areas is that they are easily manageable, visually appealing, enhances biodiversity and pollinator friendly.
- A clearly outlined Landscape Plan which demonstrates that the proposed location of underground/over ground services will not impinge on the proposed trees or planting.

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits that a review of the landscape design rationale was undertaken to assess the feasibility of including additional planting and screening and additional retention of trees and hedgerows. It is submitted that the landscape masterplan has been maximised to the full, within the constraints of the proposed development, underground services and existing overhead powerlines and it is not possible to incorporate any further additional planting or retain any additional trees and hedgerows on site.

It is submitted that care has been taken in the design of the development to maximise the level of screening and planting including the provision of screen mounds around the perimeter of the site to be planted with dense screen/native woodland planting mix; retention of 47% of existing hedgerows including those identified as significant in the Naas LAP and 28% of the existing trees. It is submitted that boundary hedges on eastern, southern and western boundaries of the site are left intact with the new layout.

The applicant acknowledges that there will be an unavoidable loss of existing hedgerows in the centre of the site including the removal of trees and hedges across the centre and north of the site.

It is submitted that the proposal includes a tree replanting scheme with approximately 5.4ha of woodland and 0.56 ha of native scrub planting. It is indicated that approximately 165 trees will be removed and more than 44,000 new trees will be planted including 36,150 trees for native woodland/structural screen planting, 6210 trees for native scrub planting, 2,529 advanced trees in a mix of pine and native deciduous trees, 4.5ha short meadow and 3.4ha long meadow and 1.38ha of biofiltration planting.

30. A revised Tree Protection Plan amended in line with the revised Landscape Plan showing retain trees and hedges along with the overall site plan.

- **Tree Protection Plan:** a scaled site plan (1:500@A1) of the proposed development, clearly showing and distinguishing (by colour coding) those trees and hedges to be retained and protected and those to be removed ; showing alignments of Tree Protection Fencing and areas to be excluded from construction activities and compound(s), site office(s), plant, equipment and materials storage. Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of all trees and hedgerows to be clearly shown on this drawing.
- **Arboricultural Method Statement:** clear and practically achievable measures to be used during the construction period, for the protection and management of all trees and hedges that are to be retained, as shown in the Tree Protection Plan.
- **Summary Table:** Summary of all trees and hedgerow proposed for removal and retention to include numbers and percentages.
- **Arboricultural Impact Assessment:** a thorough, detailed and realistic analysis and assessment of the likely impacts of the proposed development on the surveyed trees and hedges; along with a summary table of the tree population and quantification of impacts/losses etc. (total number surveyed and total numbers/percentage to be retained and felled respectively).

Applicant's Response

The applicant submits updated tree protection details to include details of protection fencing alignment and tree/hedgerow protection fence detail in accordance with TII standards.

The applicant advises that the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 green infrastructure map includes significant hedgerows and includes a section of hedgerow to the south along the Bluebell stream and that this is being fully retained within the proposal.

The applicant refers to Arboricultural Method Statement and Assessment that were submitted with the original application and refers to the updated details regarding trees.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT FURTHER INFORMATION / SUBMISSIONS

The applicant's response to the further information received by the Planning Authority on 23/06/2025 was deemed to be significant. Revised public notices were received by the Planning Authority on 26/06/2025. Submissions / Observations were invited over a 5 week statutory period, to 30/07/2025.

2 no. submissions were received in support of the development. The main items raised are as follows:

- Positive impacts for Naas and the wider Kildare region;
- Employment creation;
- Stimulation of local economy;

- Sustainable development through CPPAS;
- Positive contribution to transition to low carbon economy;
- Positive design enhancements;
- Combined Cycle Gas Turbines will reduce emissions;
- District heating benefits;
- Aligns with national policy;
- Proactive approach to archaeological heritage protection.

3 no. submissions were received in opposition to the development. The main items raised are as follows:

- Scale, extent and calculation of greenhouse gas emissions, errors in EIAR;
- Mitigation by CPPAs ineffective; lack of additional renewable resources to power the plant
- Climate Act obligations – legal precedent – obligations on local authorities in decision making for high emissions developments.

The contents of the submissions have been considered in this assessment.

5.0 INTERNAL REPORTS / REFERRALS PRESCRIBED BODIES

This application/further information response was referred to the following, reports received as indicated below. Please refer to the specific report on file should further details be required.

MD Naas:	No objection/agrees with Transportation Report
MD Kildare / Newbridge:	No report
Environment:	No objection subject to conditions
Water Services:	No objection subject to conditions
Transportation:	No objection subject to conditions
NRDO:	No objection subject to conditions
Ecology:	Recommends Refusal
Heritage:	Recommends Refusal
Parks:	Recommends Refusal
CFO:	No objection subject to conditions

External Consultants

The file was also referred to Codema, Dublin's Energy Agency to provide advice to Kildare County Council regarding proposed data centre development. Codema is a not-for-profit CLG, owned by the Dublin Local Authorities. Codema has developed expertise in the areas of local and regional energy planning and has been working with Local Authorities and their planning departments on such topics for more than 10 years. Codema has also been engaging closely with Data Centres, given their proliferation around the Dublin region in particular, seeking to increase their energy efficiency and sustainability by utilising the waste heat which they produce.

Codema, acting as neutral energy and climate mitigation advisers have reviewed and assessed the further information response and addendum to EIAR.

Codema Energy Consultant: Concerns raised however in event of a grant of permission mitigatory conditions applied.

Prescribed Bodies

This application was referred to the following, reports received as indicated below. Please refer to the specific report on file should further details be required.

Uisce Eireann:	No objection subject to conditions
HSE (Env Health):	No objection subject to conditions
Dept (Heritage):	No objection subject to conditions
EPA:	Comments re: future licence application post planning
TII:	No objection subject to conditions
HSA:	Does not advise against a grant of planning permission
An Taisce:	Concern re: emissions, carbon budgets, Climate Act
ESB:	No response
Gas Networks Irl:	No response
Irish Aviation Auth:	No response

6.0 POLICY CONTEXT (INCLUDING UPDATES)

6.1 NATIONAL POLICY

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act sets a legally binding framework for achieving a climate-neutral economy by 2050 and a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. It amends the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 by establishing clear targets, carbon budgets, and sectoral emission ceilings. The Act also enhances the role of the Climate Change Advisory Council, strengthens reporting requirements for government ministers, and mandates local authorities to develop climate action plans.

Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP 25)

Climate Action Plan 2025 builds upon CAP 24 by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and it should be read in conjunction with Climate Action Plan 2024.

The Plan provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

A renewables-led system is at the core of Ireland's plan to radically reduce emissions in the electricity sector, protect our energy security, and ensure our economic competitiveness. This requires the accelerated and increased deployment of new renewable electricity generation capacity and related infrastructure.

CAP25 actions are seeking solutions to the challenging problems in construction materials and the introduction of further measures to encourage and support a reduction in fossil fuel demand.

The deployment of district heating at scale, particularly in densely populated areas with readymade heat sources located nearby, is a key Government objective under the Climate Action Plan and a component in meeting the built environment sectoral emissions ceiling.

With regard to Demand Management, the plan notes that the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities (CRU) National Energy Demand Strategy seeks to deliver key regulatory measures necessary to allow all energy system users to benefit from a more flexible energy system, reducing the strain on the power system and ensuring that renewable potential is maximised. A review of the Large Energy Users Connection Policy is ongoing and will ensure that new Large Energy User grid connections do not contribute to energy security challenges and that the power system decarbonises new demand in line with climate targets.

While CAP25 makes no specific reference to data centres, the development would be considered to be a Large Energy User.

Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Irelands Enterprise Strategy 2022

Data centres are core digital infrastructure and play an indispensable role in our economy and society. The capacity constraints experienced by our electricity system today, and the binding carbon budgets that require rapid decarbonisation of energy use across all sectors, necessarily mean that not all existing demand for data centre development can be accommodated.

The Statement signals the Government's clear preference for data centre developments that are associated with strong economic activity and employment; make efficient use of our electricity grid, deliver renewable energy in Ireland.

These principles will be reflected in energy, enterprise and planning policy, regulatory and other decisions across Government Departments, local authorities, enterprise development agencies and other public bodies.

The Government is committed to ensuring the principles are effective in prioritising future data centre development that delivers strong economic benefits, sustainable energy plans, and a willingness to promote Ireland's national decarbonisation objectives through a fully supportive planning system and other regulatory regimes.

Principles for sustainable data centre development that should inform and guide decisions on future data centre development are:

- ***Economic impact***
- ***Grid capacity and efficiency***
- ***Renewables additionality***

- ***Co-location or proximity with future-proof energy supply***
- ***Decarbonised data centres by design***
- ***SME access and community benefits***

The Government has a clear preference for data centres that comply with these principles.

Data centres are also construction projects, built environment and physical investments of scale. By necessity, they have an impact on the geography and communities in their vicinity. Data centre developers should make every effort to minimise the disruption of their construction on these communities.

Ireland's Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030

The Plan builds on previous national strategies and sets out in detail objectives, policies and measures to ensure achievement of those objectives. In June 2019, the Government agreed to support the adoption of a net zero target by 2050 at EU level, and to pursue emissions reduction nationally which is in line with reaching climate neutrality in Ireland by 2050. The annual Climate Action Plan is the Irish Government's main vehicle for introducing new climate and energy policies and, as such, provides the basis of the content of the National Economic and Climate Plan. Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate action Plan.

Emissions reduction to be achieved through:

- Decarbonisation – Green House Gas Emissions and Removals
- Decarbonisation – Renewable Electricity
- Energy Efficiency
- Energy Security
- Internal Energy Market
- Research, Innovation and Competitiveness

The Plan seeks to implement energy actions under the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy (2022) to ensure that large demand connections are regionally balanced to minimise grid reinforcements.

National Planning Framework – Ireland 2040 – First Revision 2025

National Strategic Outcome 6 - A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills

Digital and Data Innovation The practical impact of digitalisation will only increase in the years ahead and this will pose both opportunities and challenges which will require a coherent and informed policy response. Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework seeks to position Ireland as a digital leader, driving and enabling digital transformation across the economy and society.

The strategy identifies four dimensions with associated targets and work streams including the digital transformation of business, enhanced digital infrastructure and connectivity, increased digital skills, as well as the further digitalisation of public services.

Ireland's Industry 4.0 Strategy 2020-2025 and AI - Here for Good: National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Ireland set out the Government's response to the scale of transformation posed by digital technologies and provide a roadmap to ensure that the State will be at the forefront of technological adoption. In the short term, opportunities provided by access to high quality broadband services will be fully exploited through the roll-out of the State intervention segment of the National Broadband Plan, delivering a step-change in digital connectivity and ensuring that coverage extends to remoter areas including villages, rural areas and islands.

Ireland is very attractive in terms of international digital connectivity, climatic factors and current and future renewable energy sources for the development of international digital infrastructures, such as **data centres**. These factors help to underpin Ireland's international position as a leading location for ICT, which contributes to wider synergies in the economy as indigenous and multinational enterprises develop linkages and benefit from the potential of regional clustering.

Promotion of Ireland as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructure and associated economic activities is identified.

National Strategic Outcome 8

Our low-lying areas and cities and many rural areas are potentially vulnerable if we do not take the appropriate steps to better manage the impacts of climate change.

The national climate objective is to achieve a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient, biodiversity rich, and environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral economy by 2050.

Sustainable land use management is required in order to achieve a balance between the built environment, natural environment, biodiversity and climate. The NPF is committed to the achievement of compact and sustainable growth, supporting the provision of sustainable transport options, water services delivery and the delivery of renewable energy development while protecting and where possible enhancing and restoring our natural environment in order to ensure sustainable development for our planet and future generations. Adaptation measures will be required to respond locally specific, place-based responses, which address not only climate impacts but also integrate coherently with local social, economic and ecological systems.

The diversification of our energy production systems away from fossil fuels and towards green energy such as wind, wave, solar and biomass, together with smart energy systems and the conversion of the built environment into both generator/consumer of energy and the electrification of transport fleets require the progressive and strategic development of a different form of energy grid

National Policy Objective 69 Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy

mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions as expressed in the most recently adopted carbon budgets.

National Policy Objective 70 Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a climate neutral economy by 2050.

National Policy Objective 71 Support the development and upgrading of the national electricity grid infrastructure, including supporting the delivery of renewable electricity generating development.

Draft Large Energy Users Connection Policy 2025

The purpose of this proposed decision paper is to set out a potential pathway for connection applications for new data centre customers to the electricity grid with due regard to security of supply and network constraints while minimising, where possible, potential impacts on national renewable energy targets and carbon emissions.

In recent years, there has been a step-change in electricity demand growth driven by Large Energy Users (LEUs), largely driven by the increase in data centre developments. The electricity consumption used by data centres rose from 5% of Ireland's total demand in 2015 to 21% in 2023, accounting for 85% of the overall electricity demand growth.

This proposed decision paper sets out conditions for new data centre customers seeking to connect to the electricity network in advance of the potential development of a State-led approach.

The policy will apply to all data centres seeking to connect to the electricity network. Data centres will be required to provide dispatchable generation or storage on site or nearby which will participate in the electricity market. Ramped up demand will be linked to delivery of the required generation capacity. System operators will be required to take account of the location of the data centre connection and capacity within a constrained or unconstrained region of the electricity network. System operators will be required to publish regular information on existing and future grid network capacity to accommodate connections on the electricity network. Data centre operators will be required to self-report to the system operator annually with regard to their use of renewable energy and their emissions.

6.2 REGIONAL POLICY

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (RSES)

Guiding Principles

- Align to national strategy and approach for data centres – right location for use and energy demand.

Sources of waste heat include data centres. Waste heat is a resource which is too often overlooked and can meet a large proportion of the Region's heat demands indigenously and without fossil fuels. In response, the Strategy seeks

to support the micro-generation, geothermal energy, district heating, storage of heat and energy and the role of the electricity transmission and distribution network.

Regional Policy Objective 8.25 Local Authorities **shall** support the national objective to promote Ireland as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities at appropriate locations.

6.3 LOCAL POLICY

Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029

Strategic Vision: To build on the strengths of the county in order to improve the quality of life of all residents, through the creation of high-quality job opportunities, by the provision of high-quality residential development supported by adequate community infrastructure, through the provision of a high-quality sustainable transport network, by healthy placemaking and transformational regeneration, by supporting the transition to a low carbon climate resilient environment, by embracing inclusiveness and by enhancing our natural and built environment for future generations.

Naas

Chapter 2 Core and Settlement Strategy

Section 2.11 Naas is identified as a Key Town in the Plan, based on the designation in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031 (RSES). Key Towns are large economically active service and/or county towns (Naas and Maynooth) that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres.

Achieving critical mass in the Key Town of Naas forms part of the preferred development strategy of the Plan.

Section 2.14.2 The primary focus for employment growth in Kildare will be towards the Key Towns of Naas and Maynooth. In Naas, key employment opportunities will arise within Millennium Park and the Northwest Quadrant areas as well as the expansion of a range of enterprises in the existing industrial parks around the town, with a particular focus on the food processing sector, in addition to IT, digital/tech, logistics and high-tech manufacturing. The Naas LAP also makes a special provision for data centre development at two sites.

Objective

CS O2 Ensure that the future growth and spatial development of County Kildare provides for a county that is resilient to climate change, enables the decarbonisation of the county's economy and reduces the county's carbon footprint in support of national targets for climate mitigation and adaption objectives as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Chapter 4 Resilient Economy and Job Creation

4.4.2 Key Towns

Naas and Maynooth are identified in the County's Economic Development Hierarchy as its two Key Towns. These towns are recognised as having the potential to accommodate commensurate levels of population and employment growth, facilitated by their location on public transport corridors and aligned with requisite investment in services, amenities and sustainable transport. The growth of these Key Towns will require sustainable, compact and sequential development and urban regeneration in the town core. The degree to which these 'Key Towns' can grow will have a notable bearing on the County's ability to attract additional multinational companies. The development of urban centres of scale is key to developing agglomeration benefits, which is considered an especially important factor in creating an appropriate economic environment for multinational companies.

As evident from the RSES, one of the key economic benefits of developing urban centres of scale within the region, is to ensure that we can accrue agglomeration benefits. Agglomeration allows for a variety of external benefits such as labour and knowledge spill overs, supplier concentration, and specialisation, which in turn contributes to increased productivity and regional economic growth. For this reason, and other factors, the IDA notes that clear trends are evident in the demands of multinational companies in selecting locations; with one of the main reasons being "regions of scale with appropriate urban centres". Therefore, ensuring investment priorities align with the growth ambitions of Kildare's designated key towns – namely Naas and Maynooth is imperative.

Section 4.4.4 Naas

A key priority for the Key Town of Naas is the regeneration of the historic town centre with enhancement of retail and commercial functions and consolidation of strategic development areas. Other key economic considerations are the strengthening of the local employment base through the development of MERITS, Millennium Park including the broader North-West Quadrant area and the regeneration of underutilised lands including industrial lands in the north-east of the town. The strategic aim for the Plan is to protect existing employment in the town and to create new employment opportunities for Naas to fulfil its role as a 'Key Town' in the region. It is also important to recognise Naas's role as the County town of Kildare, particularly as a hub for high quality employment.

Naas also benefits from a strategic location, proximate to the M9 motorway and rail connection in Sallins, which provides the town with great opportunities to avail of its proximity to the biggest market in Dublin and other cities throughout Ireland, as well as getting access to international markets via the connectivity provided by Dublin International Airport and Dublin Port.

Policy

RE P12 Ensure that economic and enterprise related development is provided in a manner which facilitates a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and accelerates the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy.

Objective

RE O22 Promote the Key Town of Naas as a primary centre of high-quality employment in the County so that its significant residential population will have employment opportunities within easy distance of their homes, thereby reducing outbound commuting.

RE O23 Strengthen and promote the local employment base through the development of MERITS (Mid-East Regional Innovation Thinkspace), Millennium Park in the North-West Quadrant and the regeneration of underutilised lands including industrial lands in the north-east of the town.

RE O25 Co-ordinate the delivery of strategic infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle linkages within Naas, in a manner which supports future development and population growth.

RE O34 Promote and facilitate the development of the Sallins-Naas-Newbridge Economic Cluster, including the proposed Naas to Newbridge Strategic Economic and Employment Zone, by supporting identified key sectoral opportunities along with requisite targeted infrastructural investment, in accordance with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031.

Chapter 5 Sustainable Mobility and Transport

Section 5.4.1 Walking and Cycling

Objective TM O31 Ensure the delivery of robust and efficient cycle and walking infrastructure in Naas by enhancing permeability and improving linkages between Naas Town Centre, surrounding residential and employment areas, Sallins Railway Station and the Northwest Quadrant.

TM O34 Investigate the feasibility of developing a cycle-way from Caragh Village to Naas along the R409 and R445.

TM O62 Ensure the protection of the strategic transport function of national roads, including motorways and their associated junctions, by maintaining and protecting their safety, capacity, efficiency and strategic function, in line with national policy as set out in the Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).

Section 5.7 Regional Roads

TM P6 Maintain and improve the capacity, safety and function of the regional road network (as finance becomes available) and to ensure that it is planned for and managed to enable the sustainable economic development of the county and wider area while encouraging a shift towards more sustainable travel and transport in accordance with the Core Strategy, the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) and the Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042.

TM O95 Restrict new access onto regional roads where the 80km per hour speed limit currently applies, except in the following exceptional circumstances:

- Developments of strategic, local, regional or national importance, where there is a significant gain to the county through employment creation or other economic benefit.

TM O96 Improve and re-align where necessary and as funds allow, the regional roads subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA so as to ensure and protect the favourable status of European sites and their hydrological connections.

Table 5.5 Regional Roads identified for improvement - R409 Naas to Junction of R403 at Blackwood.

Chapter 6 Infrastructure and Environmental Services

To create an environment characterised by high quality infrastructure networks and environmental services that complement the overall settlement and economic strategy and ensures the health and wellbeing of those who live and work in the County, also securing the economic future of the County.

Policies

IN P1 Ensure that water supply infrastructure is sufficient to meet the growing needs of the population and facilitate economic development within the county.

IN P2 Ensure the protection and enhancement of water quality throughout Kildare in accordance with the EU WFD and facilitate the implementation of the associated programme of measures in the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 (and subsequent updates).

IN P4 Ensure adequate surface water drainage systems are in place which meet the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan in order to promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.

IN P5 Ensure the continued incorporation of Flood Risk Management and National Flood Risk Policy (2018) into the spatial planning of Kildare, to meet the requirements of the EU Floods Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and to promote a climate resilient County.

IN P6 Implement European Union, National and Regional waste related environmental policy, legislation, guidance, and codes of practice, in order to support the transition from a waste management economy towards a circular economy.

IN P8 Implement the provisions of EU and National legislation on air, noise, and light pollution and other relevant legislative requirements, as appropriate.

Objectives

IN O5 Manage, protect, and enhance surface water and groundwater quality to meet the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.

IN O6 Require an undisturbed edge or buffer zone to be maintained, where appropriate, having regard to the riparian buffer zones (Table 12.4 refers) to maintain the natural function of existing ecosystems associated with water courses and their riparian zones, and to enable sustainable public access. The

width of the edge or buffer zone shall be determined during the appropriate environmental assessment such as EcIA or AA.

IN O7 Protect recognised salmonid water courses in conjunction with Inland Fisheries Ireland such as the Liffey catchment, which are recognised to be exceptional in supporting salmonid fish species.

IN O15 Ensure all new developments connect to public wastewater infrastructure where available.

IN O21 Facilitate the development of nature based Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, including the retrofitting of SuDS in established urban areas. Culverting entire drains and streams will generally be prohibited; interference with natural drainage systems is to be minimised and the Council will explore opportunities to remove culverted drainage systems in favour of open, natural drainage systems.

IN O22 Require the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other nature-based surface water drainage as an integral part of all new development proposals.

IN O23 Require new developments to reduce the generation of storm water runoff and ensure all storm water generated is disposed of on-site OR attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved water system, with consideration for the following:

- The infiltration into the ground through the provision of porous pavement such as permeable paving, swales, and detention basins.
- The holding of water in storage areas through the construction of green roofs, rainwater harvesting, detention basins, ponds, and wetlands.
- The slow-down in the movement of water.

IN O25 Promote the use of green infrastructure (e.g., green roofs, green walls, planting, and green spaces) as natural water retention measures.

IN O33 Manage flood risk in the county in accordance with the sequential approach and requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG and OPW (2009) and circular PL02/2014 (August 2014), when preparing plans, programmes, and assessing development proposals. To require, for lands identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment to an appropriate level of detail, addressing all potential sources of flood risk, demonstrating compliance with the Guidelines or any updated version of these guidelines, paying particular attention to avoidance of known flood risk, residual flood risks and any proposed site-specific flood management measures.

IN O36 Require that development along urban watercourses comply with the Inland Fisheries Ireland Guidance: Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (2020), including the maintenance of a minimum riparian zone of 35 metres for river channels greater than 10 meters in width, and 20 meters for river channels less than 10 metres in width. Development within this zone will

only be considered for water compatible developments as defined in the OPW Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).

IN O57 Assess applications for developments, having regard to the impact on the quality of surface waters and any targets and measures set out in the River Basin Management Plan and any subsequent local or regional plans. Where developments have the potential to impact the water quality of surface waters and/or any of the targets and measures set out in the RBMP, such a project should be subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA.

IN O65 Ensure that noise levels caused by new and existing developments throughout the county do not exceed normally accepted standards.

IN O66 Enforce and comply with European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018 by:

- Regulating and controlling activities likely to give rise to excessive noise (other than those activities which require regulation by the EPA)
- Requiring new developments and / or activities likely to give rise to excessive noise to install noise mitigation measures and monitors.

IN O68 Require the design of external lighting schemes to minimise the incidence of light spillage or pollution into the surrounding environment having regard to the residential amenity of surrounding areas and the need to mitigate adverse impacts on sensitive fauna and protected species.

Chapter 7 Energy and Communications

To encourage and support energy and communications efficiency and to achieve a reasonable balance between responding to EU and National Policies on climate change, renewable energy and communications and enabling resources to be harnessed in a manner consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county.

The Council recognises the range of new and developing technologies and supporting infrastructure that can contribute to minimising greenhouse gas emissions and to securing a greater proportion of our energy needs from renewable resources.

Policy

EC P1 Reduce our carbon footprint in line with national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions.

EC P2 Promote renewable energy use generation and associated electricity grid infrastructure at appropriate locations within the built environment and open countryside to meet national objectives towards achieving a net zero carbon economy by 2050.

EC P5 Promote the development of solar energy infrastructure in the County.

EC P11 Support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national Policy.

EC P14 Require high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of sustainable and renewable energy sources in new and existing buildings

Objective

EC O1 Ensure that energy intensive sectors incorporate significant renewable energy sources to reduce their carbon footprint.

EC O5 Support and encourage the sustainable development of renewable energy auto production units (the production of energy primarily for on-site usage) for existing and proposed developments in line with relevant design criteria, amenity and heritage considerations and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, subject to AA screening and where applicable, Stage 2 AA so as to ensure and protect the favourable status of European sites and their hydrological connections. Such developments will have regard for protected species and provide mitigation and monitoring where applicable.

EC O18 Encourage and support the use of appropriately scaled solar energy in residential, commercial and industrial developments. The incorporation of solar technologies into the built fabric of existing buildings will also be encouraged where it does not materially affect the character of the structure or adjoining structures.

EC O19 Promote the development of solar energy infrastructure for on-site energy use, including solar PV and solar thermal technologies. On-site battery storage projects shall be considered subject to fire safety, environmental safeguards and the protection of natural or built heritage features, biodiversity views and prospects.

EC O23 Support the installation of solar collectors and panels for the production of heat or electricity in commercial and industrial buildings in line with relevant design criteria, building regulations and technical guidance documents.

EC O36 Promote and encourage the use of district heating systems in new residential and commercial developments where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment, landscape, biodiversity or local amenities.

EC O44 Require all new development to be designed to take account of the impacts of climate change, and that energy conservation, energy efficiency and energy renewable measures are incorporated in new and existing buildings through the appropriate design and location of new development, in accordance with relevant building regulations and guidelines.

Chapter 11 Built and Cultural Heritage

To protect, conserve and sensitively manage the built and cultural heritage of County Kildare and to encourage sensitive sustainable development so as to ensure its survival and maintenance for future generations.

Policy

AH P1 Recognise the value and opportunity of Kildare's unique heritage resource and to manage, conserve, promote and protect it, for present and future generations.

AH P2 Protect and enhance archaeological sites, monuments and where appropriate and following detailed assessment, their setting, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or newly discovered archaeological sites and/or subsurface and underwater archaeological remains.

Objective

AH O3 In co-operation with the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage require archaeological impact assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring and/or underwater archaeological impact assessments for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance and where a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological deposits, based on recommendations of a suitably qualified archaeologist and the Council will seek and have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

AH O4 Ensure that development in the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest is not detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting by reason of its location, scale, bulk or detailing and to ensure that such proposed developments are subject to an archaeological assessment prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Such an assessment will seek to ensure that the development can be sited and designed in such a way as to avoid impacting on archaeological heritage that is of significant interest including previously unknown sites, features, objects and areas of underwater archaeological heritage.

Chapter 12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

To protect, manage and enhance the County's biodiversity for future generations, including sites designated at national and EU level, protected species and habitats outside of designated sites and to promote the development of an integrated Green Infrastructure network in order to improve our resilience to climate change and to enable the role of Green Infrastructure in delivering sustainable communities.

Policy

BI P1 Integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features by applying the mitigation hierarchy to potential adverse impacts on important ecological features (whether designated or not), i.e. avoiding impacts where possible, minimising adverse impacts, and if significant effects are unavoidable by including

mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate. Opportunities for biodiversity net gain are encouraged.

BI P2 Seek to contribute to maintaining or restoring the conservation status of all sites designated for nature conservation or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and agreements. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Ramsar Sites and Statutory Nature Reserves.

BI P4 Ensure that any new development proposal does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation on plant, animal or bird species which are protected by law.

BI P6 Recognise the important contribution trees and hedgerows make to the county biodiversity resource climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation.

BI P7 Recognise and promote inland waters, natural environmental assets and to protect rivers, streams and other watercourses and, wherever possible, maintain them in an open state capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora while discouraging culverting or realignment.

BI P12 Recognise the importance of Green Infrastructure in Kildare and protect this valued biological resource, the ecosystem services it provides and the contribution to climate resilience.

BI P15 Promote and support the development of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to ensure surface water is drained in an environmentally friendly way by replicating natural systems.

Objective

BI O1 Require, as part of the Development Management Process, the preparation of Ecological Impact Assessments that adequately assess the biodiversity resource within proposed development sites, to avoid habitat loss and fragmentation and to integrate this biodiversity resource into the design and layout of new development and to increase biodiversity within the proposed development. Such assessments shall be carried out in line with the CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.

BI O9 Avoid development that would adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site and promote favourable conservation status of habitats and protected species including those listed under the Birds Directive, the Wildlife Acts and the Habitats Directive, to support the conservation and enhancement of Natura 2000 Sites including any additional sites that may be proposed for designation during the period of this Plan and protect the Natura 2000 network from any plans and projects that are likely to have a significant effect on the coherence or integrity of a Natura 2000 Site

BI O10 Ensure an Appropriate Assessment Screening, in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, Section 177A of the Planning and Development Act (2001-2022) or any superseding legislation and with DEHLG guidance (2009), is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site to determine the likelihood of the plan or project having a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects and to ensure that projects which may give rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites will not be permitted (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) unless for reasons of overriding public interest.

BI O18 Require all applications for new developments to identify, protect and sensitively enhance the most important ecological features and habitats, and incorporate these into the overall open space network, keeping free from development and to provide links to the wider Green Infrastructure network as an essential part of the design process and by making provision for local biodiversity (e.g. through provision of swift boxes or towers, bat roost sites, hedgehog highways, green roofs, etc.).

BI O26 Prevent, in the first instance, the removal of hedgerows to facilitate development. Where their removal is unavoidable, same must be clearly and satisfactorily demonstrated to the Planning Authority. In any event, removal shall be kept to an absolute minimum and there shall be a requirement for mitigation planting comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the original and where possible linking to existing adjacent hedges. Ideally, native plants of a local provenance and origin should be used for any such planting. Removal of hedgerows and trees prior to submitting a planning application will be viewed negatively by the planning authority and may result in an outright refusal.

BI O29 Require the undertaking of a comprehensive tree survey carried out by a suitably qualified arborist where development proposals require felling of mature trees; the tree survey shall assess the condition, ecological and amenity value of the tree stock proposed for removal as well as mitigation planting and a management scheme. It should be noted that rotting and decaying trees are an integral part of a woodland ecosystem and can host a range of fungi and invertebrates, important for biodiversity. While single or avenue trees that are decaying may be removed, others that are part of group or cluster may be subject to retention.

BI O37 Ensure the protection of rivers, streams and other watercourses and, wherever possible, maintain them in an open state capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora while discouraging culverting or realignment. Endeavour to re-open previously culverted streams and watercourses through any future development/redevelopment proposals. BI O38 Require the preparation and submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) including, but not limited to, bat and otter surveys for developments along river or canal corridors. BI O39 Consult with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and Waterways Ireland in relation to any development (greenfield development or

redevelopment of brownfield sites) that could potentially impact on the aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats while taking account of 'Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites' (IFI, 2004) and 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (IFI, 2020).

BI O41 Maintain riparian buffer zones and potential uses as identified in Table 12.4 when considering potential development and proposed development layouts within or adjacent to waterways

BI O45 Ensure that any runoff from developed areas does not result in any deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats and require that pollution generated by a development is treated within the development area prior to discharge to local watercourses.

BI O76 Promote and support the development of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as integrated constructed wetlands, permeable surfaces, filter strips, ponds, swales and basins at a site, district and county level and to maximise the amenity and bio-diversity value of these systems.

Chapter 13 Landscape Recreation and Amenity

To provide for the protection, management, and enhancement of the landscape of Kildare to ensure that development does not disproportionately impact on the unique landscape character areas, scenic routes or protected views; and to support the provision of high quality and accessible recreational facilities, amenities and open spaces for residents and visitors to the County, in recognition of the contribution of all forms of recreation to quality of life, personal health and wellbeing.

Policy

LR P1 Protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and, where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the existing local landscape.

Chapter 14 Urban Design

Action UD A2 - Prepare a series of Masterplans / Urban Design Frameworks over the lifetime of the Plan, in co-operation with relevant stakeholders including: The North West Quadrant Naas; Naas to Newbridge Strategic Employment Zone.

Chapter 15 Development Management Standards (See plan for full range of standards).

Data Centre references within the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029

Chapter 4 Resilient Economy and Job Creation/Chapter 7 Energy and Communications

Section 4.16 and Section 7.13.1

It is Government Policy as set out in the National Planning Framework and the Government Statement on "The Role of Data Centres in Ireland" to promote Ireland as a sustainable international destination for Information Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure such as Data Centres. To date, some of the world's best known companies including Microsoft, Google, IBM and Amazon AWS have chosen Ireland as the location for their European data centres.

Kildare County Council acknowledges that data centres contribute to job creation during construction, maintenance and from associated areas such as research and development, data analytics, customer service, technical support, marketing and sales. Data centres generally need to be located in areas where there exists a significant and sustainable electricity supply, high powered fibre optic cables, good accessibility and on large land banks that are easily developable with future expansion possibilities. In addition, the Council is mindful that Data Centres should avoid sensitive landscapes and environments.

7.12.1 Low Carbon District Heating

Where data centre developments are approved in the County, the Council will expect district heating systems to be developed for adjoining residential, community and/or commercial developments.

Policy RE P11 and EC P18 Support the accommodation of Data Centres at appropriate locations in line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework and the principles for Sustainable Data Centre Development of the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy (July 2022) subject to appropriate Transport, Energy and Environmental Assessments and all relevant planning conditions. The location of data centres shall be situated where they will not have a potential likely significant effect on a European Site. Such developments shall be subject to an AA Screening Report, and where applicable, Stage 2 AA. They shall have regard for any hydrological connection shared with a European Site and shall account for any potential likely significant effects and provide mitigation and monitoring where appropriate.

Objective RE O71 Require that any application for a data centre will be subject to all relevant and cumulative environmental assessments and planning conditions and shall take account of the cumulative visual impact of the proposed connections of the data centre with electricity transmission, renewable energy and broadband infra- structure in the area.

RE O72 Require data centres to consider the use of sustainable renewable sources of energy to fuel their operations in whole in the first instance or in part (minimum of 30%) where this is not possible and where it has been satisfactorily demonstrated not to be possible, subject to all relevant and cumulative environmental assessments and planning conditions.

Objectives

EC O36 Promote and encourage the use of district heating systems in new residential and commercial developments where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment, landscape, biodiversity or local amenities.

EC O59 Consider applications for data centres having regard to the following criteria:

- Accessibility/ease of connection to power
- Availability of renewable energy to power any proposed data centre.
- Availability of high-powered fibre optic infrastructure
- Transport/road accessibility
- Compatibility of surrounding land uses/zoning
- Avoidance of designated sites including specifically avoidance of development of data centres where they would adversely affect the integrity of a European Site
- Availability of significant landbanks
- Noise
- Visual impact
- Flood risk

Such developments shall be subject to an AA Screening Report, and where applicable, Stage 2 AA. They shall have a regard for any hydrological connection shared with a European Site and shall account for any potential likely significant effects and provide mitigation and monitoring where appropriate.

EC O60 Require that any application for a data centre shall take account of the cumulative visual impact of the proposed connections of the data centre with electricity transmission, renewable energy and broadband infrastructure in the area.

EC O61 Require data centres to include strong energy efficiency measures to reduce their carbon footprint in support of national targets towards a net zero carbon economy, through the use of sustainable sources of energy generation in the first instance and then the use of renewable sources of energy to power their operations, where on site demand cannot be met in this way, to provide evidence of engagement with power purchase agreements (PPA) in Ireland. All data centre developments shall provide evidence of sign up to the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact.

EC O62 All data centre development applications shall have regard to the DECLG guidance document 'Towards nearly Zero Energy Buildings in Ireland – Planning for 2020 and Beyond', which promotes the increase of near Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB).

EC O63 Ensure that all significant development proposals for Data Centres are accompanied by an Energy Analysis that explores the potential for the development of low carbon district heating networks.

Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027

Zoning

The site is Zoned Objective P – Data Centre in the Naal Local Area Plan 2021-2027 - *To provide for Data Centre development and their associated infrastructure only.*

Data Centre is Permitted in Principle
Utility Structures are Open for Consideration

Data Centres

Section 3.7 Economic, Retail and Social Infrastructure Capacity

The Plan seeks to designate a sufficient amount of land for both enterprise and employment functions, commercial development and for industry and warehousing uses commensurate with Naas's role as a Key Town. The Plan continues to support the town centre as the commercial core. It is envisaged that the larger campus style sites and high-end office complexes will be located in the Northwest Quadrant. Industry and Warehousing are proposed to the southwest and northeast of the town. Sites have been identified for commercial/residential development on land located in the northeast of Naas off the Dublin Road and on the corner of the Newbridge Road / South Ring Road. Lands have been zoned for a mix of general commercial/ industrial/ enterprise uses at the Maudlins Interchange.

A specific zoning for the development of Data Centres has been applied to two sites which are considered suitable for land extensive development.

Section 6.4 Locations for Economic Development

The zoning of lands for economic development has been informed by a Sustainable Planning and Infrastructural Assessment (SPIA) which is published alongside this Plan. A range of employment uses are generally 'permitted in principle' or 'open for consideration' across a range of land use zonings. This Plan seeks to guide enterprise and employment development to appropriate locations by identifying specific economic clusters, which takes cognisance of the requirements of the different enterprises. The areas have been carefully selected to ensure the land use objectives are compatible with the wider area and that adequate land has been zoned for enterprise to grow and develop. The designated areas for economic development are Naas Town Centre and its Core Retail Area, Northwest Quadrant, Maudlins Interchange on the Dublin Road, Junction 10/Newhall and specifically for the development of Data Centres south of the Caragh Road South and at Jigginstown.

Section 6.4.5 Caragh Road South and Jigginstown

Recent years have seen a marked increase in the number of new Data Centres constructed in Ireland and this trend is expected to continue into the foreseeable future as they are central to the digital economy and generate added economic benefit across the value chain.

Data Centres by their nature, are trending towards hyper scaled units and are land extensive and energy hungry developments and can have differing locational requirements depending on the type of data accessibility speeds they

cater for. All Data Centres have common infrastructure requirements such as access to high voltage electricity lines, high powered fibre optic cables, good site security and accessibility. This Plan promotes Naas as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres.

Land has been designated between Junction 10 and Junction 9a, located centrally between two of the motorway junctions. The site will be served by the local road network which would disperse traffic between motorway interchanges to reduce any impacts on the motorway network.

Naas has been chosen as a suitable location for data centre development in recognition of its status as a Key Town. The sites identified in this LAP have the ability to cater for space extensive enterprises contiguous to the existing urban form, proximate to electricity and telecommunication infrastructure. These lands are identified exclusively for Data Centres, to ensure the location of these types of proposals are controlled proximate to serviced areas of the county. The Council will not consider any alternative use on these lands, other than those associated with Data Centres (Objective EDO 1.12).

Policy ED 1 – Enterprise and Economic Development

It is the policy of the Council to support the development of Naas as the enterprise and employment hub for County Kildare and the region, increase employment located within the town, reduce commuting and ensure new employment development contributes towards reducing carbon output.

Objective EDO 1.12 (a) Facilitate the location of Data Centre development on land designated P: Data Centre at Caragh Road South and Jigginstown for the identified land use only subject to appropriate environmental assessments, heat mapping, transport impact assessments and consideration of the cumulative impact on the electricity network supply capacity and targeted reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. (b) Any data centre project will be required to include measures to generate energy (sustainable, then renewable in the first instance) on site as part of the overall development proposal.

Section 7.8 Heat Waste Utilisation

Waste heat presents a huge indigenous resource and is the single largest available low-carbon source of energy available in the Region that is not being used. Data centres generate significant levels of waste heat which can be used in District Heating systems. District Heating refers to the capture of waste heat that is then redistributed to homes and premises around an area for functions such as central heating and water heating.

The Vision for Naas is prioritising a low carbon, compact, consolidated and connected pattern of development, providing for the future expansion of growth towards the Northwest Quadrant with a clear emphasis on linking the town centre to development on the periphery. The development of this overall area, in conjunction with the two sites identified for Data Centre developments could benefit from the roll out of a heating network bringing energy savings for businesses, residences and other buildings in the area.

Policy WH1 – Waste Heat

It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of waste heat technologies and the utilisation and sharing of waste heat in new or extended industrial and commercial developments, where the processes associated with the primary operation onsite generates waste heat.

Objective WH 1.1 Support developments which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted through the use of district heating systems, particularly in the Northwest Quadrant and sites designated specifically for Data Centres, ensuring such developments will not negatively impact upon the surrounding landscape, environment, biodiversity or local amenities.

WH 1.2 Ensure that all significant development proposals on the sites, designated for Data Centres carry out an Energy Analysis and explore the potential for the development of low carbon district heating networks.

Policy I1 – Water Supply and Wastewater

It is the policy of the Council to work in conjunction with Irish Water to protect existing water and wastewater infrastructure in Naas, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure to facilitate future growth.

Objective IO 1.4 Any project which has the potential to significantly increase the demands on the water supply for the town (e.g. Data Centres) will be required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment to ascertain whether the project has the potential to cause adverse effects on the integrity of any European/Natura 2000 site. EPA and Irish Water abstraction licensing will also require Appropriate Assessment for a project which might significantly affect a European/Natura 2000 site.

7.0 SUMMARY OF KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT

The application as described in the public notices comprises the following elements:

- The demolition of 3 no. dwelling houses, associated garages and farm outbuildings / agricultural buildings (total floor area 1,591m²);
- The construction of 6 no. two storey data centre buildings, each with loading bays, external plant area including electrical and mechanical plant rooms, fuel compound, sprinkler tanks and associated ancillary development;
- Data centre building Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 will consist of: a data hall (24,756m², overall height 19m), an administration block (2,505m² overall height 15m) and include an external screened plant area of 18m in height and 6,164m²; Gas turbines, gas engine and battery energy storage systems will be provided within each plant area;
- Data centre building No. 5 will consist of: a data hall (24,756m², overall height 19m), an administration block (2,505m² overall height 15m) and include an external screened plant area of 18m in height and 6,375m² in area and includes infrastructure for district heating; Gas turbines, gas

- engine and battery energy storage systems will be provided within the plant area;
- Adjacent to each data centre building will be a screened sprinkler tank compound (408m² to 528 m² in area) comprising of 3 no. above ground sprinkler pump containers, (1 no. 240m³ and 2 no. 268.8m³ containers) and a screened fuel compound (331m² in area) comprising 1 no. 38m³ fuel pump container and 6 no. 64m³ tanks;
- Solar panels with a total area of 3,600m² will be provided on the roof of each data centre building and rainwater harvesting is included in the development.

The proposed development of the Data Centre also comprises:

- A screened Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) compound (61m² in area) with 1 no. kiosk (3m in height and 19.5m² in area) with a biomethane gas injection point;
- A screened above Ground Installation (AGI) compound (1,753m² in area) with 4 no. kiosks each of 3m in height and 51.5 m² in area;
- A district heating building (5m in height and 341m² in area) district heating plant and in ground piping for district heating system;
- Security hub building (4.1m in height and 42m² in area) at main entrance to the proposed development;
- A single storey admin workshop/office (504m² in area) and water treatment plant (315m² in area) building (4.8m in height) and associated hydrant pump room (5m in height and 80m² in area) and 2 no. hydrant pump room storage tanks (5m in height and c.251m³ in area);
- A new access/egress from the R409 and a new emergency access/egress from the L2030 via the M7 Business Park and including a bridge over Bluebell stream;
- A cycle path and footpath along the south side of the R409 along the length of the campus site's road frontage and extending east to existing cycle and pedestrian facilities;
- A bus stop on the R409;
- Construction of a temporary construction access off R409 and temporary construction compound within the boundary of the site;
- Ancillary site development works that will include swales, detention & attenuation ponds and the installation of pipes and connections to the public water supply, foul and storm water drainage networks, and the installation of utilities;
- Other ancillary site development works will include hard and soft landscaping, including removal of existing hedgerows, planted mounding, lighting, fencing (max 2.4m)/integrated boundary treatments, bat houses, smoking shelters, signage, central services road and internal access roads, loading bays, gates,
- 210 no. car parking spaces and 104 no. bicycle parking spaces;
- The development will be integrated into the surrounding landscape and native woodland planting to all frontages, including a 30-40m landscaped buffer along the M7.

Planning permission is sought for a period of **10 years**.

This application to Kildare County Council relates to a development for the purposes of an activity requiring an industrial omissions licence.

The proposed development the subject of this application to Kildare County Council, is part of a wider Project (for Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening purposes). The Project comprises two main elements, namely: (a) The Data Centre as described above which forms the planning application being submitted to Kildare County Council; and (b) A Substation which will comprise of a new 110 kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) grid substation, the undergrounding of an existing 110kV transmission line; 2 no. dropdown towers, internal road layout, fencing, and utilities, along with associated and ancillary works. The Substation will be the subject of a separate application for approval to An Bord Pleanála under section 182A of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been prepared in respect of the overall Project, comprising both the Substation and the Data Centre, and has been submitted with the application at Halverstown, Jigginstown and Newhall, Naas, Co. Kildare.

The site has a stated area of 37.51ha.

The **significant further information** received includes:

- amendments to data centre building no. 4, which result in reducing the floor area of the associated data hall from 24,756m² to 13,683m², the external plant area to 6,065m² and the solar panel area to 1,800m².
- provision of 17 no. combined cycle gas turbines to replace 26 no. open cycle gas turbines and all associated works including services, compounds and water storage units, minor modification of locations of the proposed fuel compounds and sprinkler tank compounds,
- minor amendments to the proposed cycle path, footpath and bus stop on the R409,
- provision of mammal passes in fencing, and
- all associated ancillary site development works
- submission of a Natura Impact Statement and an addendum to the EIAR.

The proposed works now comprise 153,767 sq m from 164,840 sq m previously proposed. Demolition comprises 1591 sq m, including 3 no. dwellings.

The applicant's response to Further Information is accompanied by a wide range of documentation to support the revisions being proposed including an Addendum to the EIAR. These have been examined and considered during assessment.

7.1 Principle of development

Having regard to the principles, policies and objectives at national, regional and county level as set out at Section 6 of this report and having regard to the location and specific zoning of the site for Data Centre in the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027, it is considered that the principle of a Data Centre on the lands is acceptable.

The suitability of any data centre on the lands, is subject to siting, design and technical assessment.

10.2 Siting and design

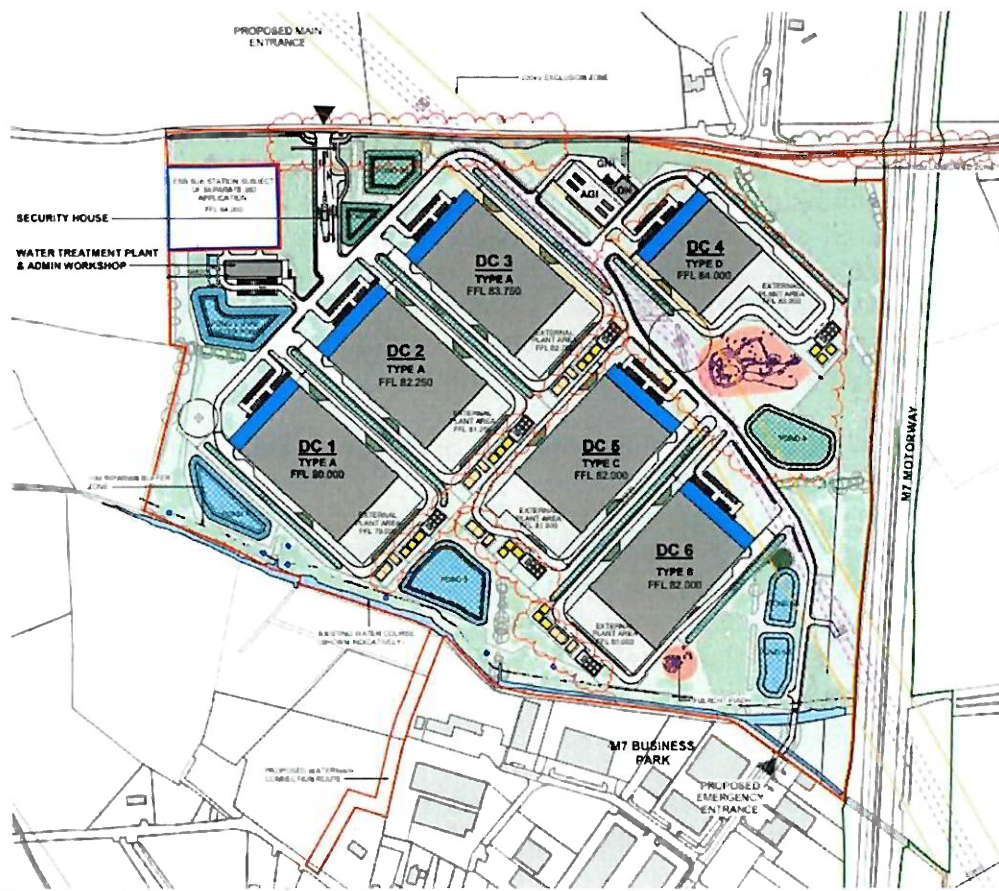
Site layout

The rectangular shaped application site comprises an area of 37.5ha located on a predominantly greenfield site within a rural area on the outskirts of Naas, west of the M7 Motorway. The proposal seeks to develop the lands for Data Centre use in line with the zoning of the site as per the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027.



Originally proposed site layout

The proposed site layout has been amended to take into account the matters raised in the further information and most notably with regard to archaeological considerations in order to preserve in situ, the previously unrecorded enclosure.



Revised site layout proposed – Further Information response

Data Centre (DC) building 4 has been amended to a square shaped footprint, with a revised L-shaped external plant area. Parking remains to the northern side of the building with revised configuration of the fuel compound and sprinkler tank compound. The building is now located a further distance from the M7 motorway and further away from the 40m landscaped zone/buffer from the motorway.

The proposal remains at 6 no. two storey data centre buildings proposed along with an adjacent compound comprising an on-site Above Ground Installation (AGI) gas infrastructure compound, a proposed district heating building and a proposed bio-gas injection point compound. The proposal also includes a water treatment plant/admin workshop building and a security hut.

A new entrance is proposed from the R409, at the north western boundary of the site. A temporary construction entrance is also proposed for a location to the east of the proposed entrance, close to the location of the eastern-most dwelling to be demolished.

A substation, subject of a separate strategic infrastructure development application to An Coimisiun Pleanála, is proposed to be located to the west of the proposed new site entrance. A proposed emergency access is proposed via the M7 Business Park, to the south-eastern corner of the site.

There are now 4 types of data centre (DC) building, Type A (DC 1, 2 and 3) Type B (DC 6), Type C (DC 5) and Type D (DC 4).

Apart from DC 4, each data centre building is rectangular in shape, with flat roof and comprises a gross internal floor area in excess of 27,260 sq m and each has a parapet height of 18m. Each DC building has an administration block to the front and an external plant area located to the rear and adjacent to each external plant area. Amendments have been made by way of additional compounds to the rear of each Data Centres 1- 3, 5 and 6. The amendments include the provision of air cool condensers and a steam turbine, adjacent to the fuel supply and sprinkler supply compounds.

Data Centre 4 has 4no. turbines whilst all of the other Data Centres, 1 - 3, 5 and 6 have 7no. turbines.

Loading bays are also proposed for each building to allow for deliveries and comprise space for 2 no. HGVs. The data hall component of each DC building is over 24,700 sq m in floor area and each building comprises 8 no. data halls within the structure. Solar panels are proposed for the roof of each DC building. The ground level of the external plant area is lower (by design) to the rear of each DC building by 1m.

DC 4 has a square shaped footprint, with a floor area of 16,188 sq m and a parapet height of 18m and building height of 19m.

DC 1, 2 and 3 are located towards the north, south and western site boundaries, DC 4 is located at the northern and eastern site boundaries, DC 5 is located centrally between the surrounding buildings and DC 6 is located at the southern site boundary. The proposed AGI gas compound/GNI/District Heating building is located towards the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to DC 3 and DC 4.

Data Centre 4 will retain proposed solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays, located on the roof but at a reduction in the number of panels, due to the amended design of the building. The amended design of Data Centre 4 comprises solar PV arrays with an area of 1800 sq m whilst the remaining data centres retain the submitted area of solar PV of 3600 sq m.

External finishes include horizontally fixed, composite flat metal panels for the data halls with louvred walls for the external plant areas. The administration block presents as a more traditional office type arrangement to the front of each data centre.

Vehicular parking is provided at the front of each DC building and at the admin/workshop building. Parking provision includes accessible spaces, along with bicycle storage and smoke shelters. Total car parking provision on site is 210 spaces, including 14 no. accessible spaces with a total of 104 no. bicycle spaces provided. EV charging facilities are provided in 63 no. points throughout the site.

DC building 4 is located in excess of 40m from public road to the north. The closest building / structure to the public road R409 is the District Heating building, located 40.3m south of the public road.

The remaining buildings are located further into the site.

On site power generation is proposed via a combination of open cycle gas turbines (OCGT) and combined cycle gas turbines (CCGT). The development now proposes to include 22 no. OCGT types and 17 no. CCGT types. On site generation is supplied via the gas network transmission infrastructure to the proposed above ground installation (AGI).

The introduction of CCGTs necessitates additional water storage on site. The revised proposed includes 6 no. new tanks of 350m³ proposed under the external plant compound area of each data centre building. Minor amendments are proposed to locations of the fuel compounds and sprinkler tank compounds as set out in the original planning application.

The site is somewhat constrained by the existing 220kV and the 110kV overhead lines traversing the site. The siting of the proposed buildings are located outside of a 63m exclusion zone of the 220kV lines. *Note: all works to the 110kV lines traversing the site, will form part of the separate SID application to An Coimisiun Pleanala.*

A total of 225 jobs are expected to be delivered on site during the operational phase.

Phasing

It is proposed that the construction of the development will take place in three phases over an 8-year period, with Phase 1 comprising DC 1, DC 2, general site works and the substation (separate SID application) and the remaining buildings in the subsequent phases. A gradual ramp up of operational demand is envisaged during the phased construction period.

Landscaping

Having regard to the existing character of the area and to the zoning of the site, the proposal will require extensive intervention on the existing landscaping baseline. The proposed development has not been designed for the site and has not taken full cognisance of the field boundaries or the levels across the site; in this regards significant cut and fill will be required to provide single level structures. Furthermore, significant tree and hedgerow removal are proposed throughout the site to facilitate the development. It is proposed to retain only the existing vegetation in certain locations, including the majority of the boundary hedgerows. It is proposed to introduce minimal additional landscaping within the site. A total of **165 trees will be removed** along with **2,903 linear metres of hedgerow**, representing 72% of the existing trees and 53% of the existing hedgerows. This is contrary to County Development Plan policy and contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

To 'compensate' the applicant proposes 0.9ha of native scrub/hedge mix for areas where full height woodland is not appropriate, such as in proximity to overhead lines, and will be managed to a maximum of 3m in height. This planting is to be **located around the margins of the site**, to provide screening of the development from adjacent areas and also providing continuous habitat corridors linking SuDS features and other proposed landscape planting with semi-natural habitats off-site to the south-west. In addition to woodland and scrub planting the proposal includes **0.639km of native hedgerows planted throughout the site** and managed to a maximum height of 3m. The proposed planting is not considered to be a satisfactory substitution for the removal of 2.9km of existing hedgerow and field /ditch network boundaries and does not provide for net-gain.

Mitigation measures include additional boundary treatments including mounding within the site and adjacent to public roads for planted with native woodland planting for screening, provision of wildflower planting, provision of additional tree and other assorted planting, provision of integrated aquatic and SUDS planting and seeding and green roof proposals for the roof of the administration blocks of each DC building. Several attenuation ponds on site will be landscaped at the edges.

Notwithstanding the mitigation measures and compensatory planting proposed on site, the proposal is heavily reliant on tree planting to replace/mitigate the loss of trees and hedgerows arising from the proposed development.

Alongside Planning concerns, the reports of the Planning Authority's Ecologist and Parks Section are critical of the extent of tree and hedgerow removal across the site. The proposal represents a significant intervention to the ecological baseline present on site, representing an irreversible loss of natural habitat and a major degradation of the ecological integrity of the site. The existing hedgerows and treelines are critical ecological networks supporting a wide range of flora and fauna. The **loss of 2.9 km of these features**, with only 0.6 km of limited-height replacement, will significantly reduce the site's capacity to support any meaningful level of biodiversity on this vast site.

It is considered that the applicant's response to further information has not adequately addressed the concerns raised, and an opportunity has been missed to integrate meaningful biodiversity into the development through balancing infrastructural needs with ecological preservation. Networks of hedgerows are generally considered more valuable than areas of small woodlands. Older hedgerows, particularly those associated with townland boundaries, act as crucial corridors for wildlife movement. The proposal as presented seeks to remove the Townland Boundary between Halverstown and Jigginstown at two locations (to the northeast and southeast of the site). Section 12.9.1 of the County Development Plan states that '*Hedgerows along townland boundaries often date from medieval times or even earlier, with some boundaries dating back to the Bronze Age bank-and-ditch enclosures. Older hedges made up of native trees and shrubs, tend to have greater value in wildlife and heritage terms, having larger banks and ditches and being richer in*

species diversity,' and therefore recognises the ecological and heritage importance of these boundaries. The optimal solution to these concerns would be a complete revision of the site layout, to integrate existing ecological networks within the site and to orientate the DC buildings within the existing field boundaries and maintaining the townland boundary in situ. Such revisions would retain more existing trees and hedgerows, reduce internal fragmentation and incorporate wildlife friendly design features such as permeable fencing and green corridors as a means of counteracting a net loss in biodiversity. However, as this is not practical at this point in the process, it is therefore recommended that to avoid the loss of the important Townland boundaries that criss-cross the entire site, that three of the proposed datacentre structures (DC4, DC5 and DC6) should be re-orientated, relocated / realigned and two of which (DC 5 and DC 6) should be reduced in size so that they may be placed within the confines of the field network created by the Townland Boundary without the need to remove the boundary. This should form a condition of permission:

Being mindful of Objective BI O26 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 which seeks to ***prevent, in the first instance, the removal of hedgerows to facilitate development. Where their removal is unavoidable, same must be clearly and satisfactorily demonstrated to the Planning Authority. In any event, removal shall be kept to an absolute minimum and there shall be a requirement for mitigation planting comprising a hedge of similar length and species composition to the original, established as close as is practicable to the original and where possible linking to existing adjacent hedges*** and in the absence of a full revision of the scheme, it may be possible to revise the layout of the proposal **by way of condition**, to reduce the extent of hedgerow removal required and to protect the Townland Boundaries by way of the following:

1. Realignment of DC 4 Building – relocate the footprint and associated internal road network and infrastructural items away from the Townland boundary to the north-east of the site to avoid the removal of the hedgerow and associated ditch system.
2. (a) Reduce in size the structures of DC 5 and DC 6, so that both structures (and ancillary works) can be placed fully within the field network formed by the Townland Boundary, without the need to remove the Townland Boundary. These revised structures (DC 5 and DC 6) should be re-orientated and placed within the field created by the Townland Boundary that runs centrally across the site (aligned east – west). The Townland Boundary would therefore be located to the north of the redesigned, and realigned DC 5 and DC 6 structures. For clarity, the two data centre structures with combined office space should be placed to the south of the Townland Boundary and to the east of the Townland boundary.
- (b) The creation of **maximum of two entrances to serve DC5 and DC6**, with access points limited to a maximum width of 5m and provided with bat-hop provisions, that penetrate the Townland Boundaries may be acceptable, subject to written agreement with the Planning

Authority prior to the commencement of development. This should also be reassessed by a fully qualified Bat Ecologist.

In this regards it may be possible to retain in excess of 800m of hedgerow (where the Townland Boundaries are protected). The proposal to plant approximately 639m of hedgerow throughout the site is not considered to be acceptable and the loss is significant. Significant planting of an additional 2,200m of hedgerow should be sought by way of condition of permission.

A 40m wide landscaped buffer is proposed as a set back from the M7 motorway.

Note Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 Objective MTO 3.8 seeks to ensure a 91-metre building line setback from the motorway and associated junctions from the nearest roadside edge to protect against transportation noise and to ensure the future protection of the motorway network. Under certain circumstances ancillary development may be considered within the setback zone in recognition of local conditions and the nature of the proposed activity.

It is noted that existing developments within the industrial parks both north and south of the site do have buildings located within a shorter setback and as close as 40m in some places. Having regard to the existing constraints on the lands including overhead lines and to the character of the surrounding area, it is considered that to restrict the proposal to a 91m set back might be too onerous.

The site is located within the Northern Lowlands Landscape Character Area – a low sensitivity landscape character area, with capacity to accommodate new development, without compromising the character of the area.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity on site is widespread in the form of existing vegetation, the agricultural character of the lands and the watercourse to the southern boundary. The proposed development will result in significant intervention on the local habitats through the loss of trees and hedgerows and disturbance of the landscape.

The lands do not fall within any designations for conservation significance. In terms of protected species, there is no evidence of badger or otter on site. The site has been recorded as a habitat for nesting birds. The site recorded lower than expected levels of roosting bats, however, there is evidence of usage of the site by bats.

The Bluebell stream has potential for dispersal of material downstream, with potential for impacts on the protected White-clawed crayfish. To mitigate the impact of the proposal on biodiversity, there are a number of measures proposed including compensatory woodland, scrub and hedgerow planting, SUDS features to include wetland planting, dry grassland swales, biofiltration planting, pond habitat. It is also proposed to provide bat roost boxes and bat houses on site to compensate for the loss of numerous trees with bat roost potential which were not recorded to support bat roosts and to provide additional roosting resources for the local bat population. Appropriate

mitigation of surface water runoff as set out in the EIAR should provide for the protection of habitats downstream. A derogation licence may be required from National Parks and Wildlife Services – this should form a condition of permission. The provision of ‘eco hops’ where it is proposed to penetrate through the Townland boundary to provide access to the south-east field network should also be conditioned in the event of a grant.

A revision has been made to the proposed Landscape Masterplan to include mammal passes in fences throughout the full extent of the site.

All works for biodiversity protection, should take place within the appropriate seasons. Additional conditions for the protection of species and habitats are set out in the report received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Department also notes that the impacts on birds has not been fully considered, particularly with regard to surveying wintering or breeding birds and has applied a condition regarding protection of birds during works.

Riparian zones

The site is bounded to the south by the Bluebell Stream.

Correctly located riparian buffer zones can minimise the impact of diffuse losses by intercepting the nutrients, sediment and pesticides and break the pathway of surface runoff.

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 Section 12.10.1 notes that riparian zones are particularly vulnerable to damage from inappropriate development. A key requirement of an integrated watercourse protection strategy is the set-aside of sufficient land along the river margin or corridor.

Where developments are proposed adjacent to waterways, on private or publicly owned land, the Planning Authority will require a setback distance of an absolute minimum of **10m** from the water's edge, however, the actual setback will be determined by the scale and importance of the River.

A 10m buffer from the Bluebell Stream is proposed to protect the aquatic environment. The applicant indicates that there has been consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to the proposal and with regard to surface water and SUDS measures for the site and that the Inland Fisheries Ireland document (Planning for Watercourses in the urban environment) has been incorporated into the design. No official comment from IFI has been received on the application nor at Further Information stage.

DC 6 is located closest to the stream. The external plant area is over 32m from the site boundary. The fuel supply compound to the rear of the building and the perimeter fencing is located away from the edge of the riparian buffer zone. The proposed emergency access (water crossing) is located within the riparian buffer, along with proposed palisade fencing. These works including final design of the water crossing are proposed to be completed in consultation with Waterways Ireland and Inland Fisheries Ireland.

As indicated elsewhere in this report, the reports of KCC Ecologist and the Parks Section are critical of the extent of tree and hedgerow removal across the site and the applicant's contention that no additional planting is possible in excess of what is already proposed, due to site constraints. Revisions to the scheme would be warranted in order to retain more existing trees and hedgerows, retain the townland boundary, reduce internal fragmentation and incorporate wildlife friendly design features such as permeable fencing and green corridors as a means of counteracting a net loss in biodiversity. The entire proposal and the comments made by the Ecologist and the Parks Department has been reassessed by the Planning Team, and it is considered that the loss of 2.9km of hedgerow (including approximately 700m of historic Townland Boundary) is too significant and would have negative impact on the overall ecology and biodiversity of the County. It would also be contrary to County Development Plan policy, which seeks to protect hedgerows (BI O26) It is therefore considered that these concerns may be mitigated, in some way, by seeking (by way of Condition of permission) a re-orientation and reduction in the size of both the DC5 and DC6 buildings (and their associated infrastructure) , the realignment of DC4 and the re-orientation and reduction in the footprint of DC5 and DC6 buildings and located a minimum of 10m away from the two sections of Townland Boundary (As set out above).

Boundary Treatment

Boundary treatment on site includes existing and proposed landscaping, supplemented by fencing. The entrance from the R409, will be marked by a 1.2m stone wall with palisade fencing to the rear.

The predominant fencing arrangement within the site is a proposed 2.4m high palisade fencing, powder coated black, to be located around the perimeter of each DC building and also inside the site boundary, stepped back from the perimeter landscaping.

There are no proposed changes to the overall height, materials or layout of the proposed fencing, apart from the proposed mammal passes, which will comprise a gap at the foot of the proposed palisade security fencing, of 500mm (width) x 200mm (height), to allow for all potential mammal species access and passage throughout the site.

Timber post and rail fencing (1.3m in height) is proposed to the ponds for safety and timber post and wire fencing (1.2m in height) is also proposed adjacent to the ponds at the southern end of the site.

Visual Impact

The scale of the proposed development is such that there is likely to be a wide visual impact arising. The application includes a series of photomontage views from the rural locations to the north, west and south west of the site and it is considered that these present a good range of views into the site.

Of the views presented, there is one view from the Osberstown Road north of the site, that appears to have the greatest visual impact. This is particularly

noted at Year 1. A subsequent image shown in outline at Phase 1-3, shows the screening/vegetation improving the view and again at Year 10, with vegetation in maturity. The impact is considerably improved by screening.

A series of CGIs are also presented, showing the proposed DC buildings from within the campus.

The visual impact from the house opposite the site is proposed to be mitigated by the landscaping of the site and the orientation and distance of the buildings. The closest view will be to DC4. This view will principally comprise the 15m administration block, with the remainder of the building to the rear.

Additional photomontages have been submitted in response to the further information and these have shown there to be no change in some cases and no significant visual impacts arising given the existing mature screening on site and proposed screen planting along the northern boundary of the site.

Cultural Heritage

The site comprises a recorded monument KD019-028 (Fulacht fia), that is subject to statutory protection and will be protected during construction and operation – protected in situ. Further evidence of possible archaeological features on site have been identified during site testing. The newly discovered feature comprises a circular ditch of c. 31m diameter, with multiple internal features and 2 no. sub-rectilinear annexes, extending to the east of the main enclosure.

The applicant has proposed to amend the design of DC building 4 in order to fully preserve in situ the previously unrecorded enclosure. The redesign also includes a 10m buffer from the outer edge of the enclosure. The enclosure has no surface expression and there is no predicted visual impact on its setting.

The report of the County Heritage Officer notes the revisions to the development to preserve the archaeological items in situ. The report is critical of the proposed removal of existing architectural heritage from the site including the partially collapsed single storey mudwalled cottage and adjoining two storey house in situ since c.1837 and of the proposed removal of the natural heritage on site including the townland boundary.

10.3 Technical Matters

Flood Risk

The Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) notes that the Naas Flood Relief Report (2022) published an updated set of Flood Risk Management Plans and included the Bluebell Stream and confirmed that the site of the proposed development is contained on Flood Zone C lands, with no risk of flooding from the Bluebell Stream.

The further information response notes that the information, data, figures and conclusions set out in the SSFRA submitted with the application for planning permission have not changed given the revised Qbar figures and that the

proposed development will not result in an increased risk of flooding within or downstream of the site.

The Planning Authority Water Services Section is satisfied with the application, subject to conditions.

Traffic / Transportation

The proposed development is acceptable in terms of set back from the Regional Road, where a 35m set back is maintained along the R409. With regard to the set back from the M7 motorway, there are no concerns arising and the application site is viewed as an infill site with existing business parks located on the adjacent sites, north and south.

Final design for the R409 road realignment works shall be approved prior to commencement and such works shall be completed prior to the occupation of the development.

The proposed works are acceptable in terms of National Road infrastructure, with some future works including a final construction and environmental management plan requiring specific details and consultation with TII, Kildare NRO and KCC to ensure that the strategic function of the M7 is safeguarded.

The Planning Authority Roads Section is satisfied with the applicant's response to Further Information, subject to conditions.

Environment

There are no significant matters arising with regard to noise, other than ensuring that the development at construction and operational stage adheres to noise level requirements. Construction works will require a Construction and Demolition Resource Waste Management Plan. Activities on site may require an EPA licence and prior authorisation under separate legislation including Waste Management and Water Pollution Acts and these shall be overseen by the Council's Environment Section.

The Planning Authority Environment Section is satisfied with the application, subject to conditions.

Energy Strategy (Updated)

Energy supply

The revised proposal provides for a supply of energy to the site via a mix of 17 no. Combined Cycle Gas Turbines and 22 no. Open Cycle Gas Turbines. The revised proposal provides for the use of CCGT not previously proposed that is indicated to be more efficient with regard to emissions.

CCGT stands for Combined Cycle Gas Turbine and refers to a type of power plant that uses a combination of gas and steam turbines to generate electricity, maximizing energy efficiency. This is achieved by using the exhaust heat from the gas turbine to produce steam, which then drives a steam turbine, generating additional power. The CCGT gas turbines will recover the medium to high grade heat from the turbines. The recovered heat will then be pumped, via

underground pipework, to an onsite district heating building at the perimeter of the data centre campus.

The revised Energy Strategy received with the response to Further Information concentrates mainly on how the applicant will achieve a minimum of 50% of its electricity needs through renewable resources. It notes that supply for the development will be via the following routes:

- Turbines as CCGT types producing up to 50% of the energy demand;
- 20% hydrogen mix from outset and 100% hydrogen from 2039;
- At least 50% of the overall energy demand being met by new renewable energy (sourced via CPPAs); and
- Use of Biomethane (i.e. a carbon-neutral renewable gas produced from organic materials).

Reference is made to the Programme for Government 2025 noting that the role Data Centres will be able to provide to help promote development of renewable energy through Corporate Power Purchases Agreements but also contribute to a more robust network through the provision of on-site back up generation or storage to which would be made available to Eirgrid during periods of need while Data Centres provide an important demand to enable higher consumption for every expanding renewable supply.

Reference is also made to the Draft Large Energy User Policy issued by the CRU in which it is indicated that data centres would be required to provide dispatchable generation or storage onsite or nearby, which will participate in the electricity market.

The Data Centre proposes on site generation and via a demand side management scheme with the Grid operator, will export to the grid. Excess power will be fed back to an on-site Gas Insulated Substation, which is subject to a separate consent procedure with An Coimisiun Pleanála. (SID application).

On-site solar production and battery for short term stabilisation and storage remains as originally proposed, with a smaller number of solar panels now proposed for the roof of DC4. Solar panels on the roof of the DC buildings is expected to equate to c. 1% of the overall demand. Each DC building will have a dedicated battery energy storage systems (BESS) within the adjoining plant area to the rear of each building. The storage capacity provides a back-up energy source, with capacity to export to the grid or capacity to store externally generated electricity.

CPPAs

The Energy Strategy outlines the rationale and intended use of Corporate Power Purchase Agreements (CPPAs). It is submitted that the renewable energy assets will be via new energy projects, not yet constructed and not currently connected to the grid and these will be additional to the existing renewable energy projects. A minimum of 50% of the energy will be sourced via CPPAs with further potential indicated to increase above this minimum target. CPPAs are expected to be from a mix of wind, solar and battery energy storage projects. It is proposed to contract for 21MW of wind and 42MW of

solar each year for 8 years, representing less than 10% of the excess of 6000MW of energy with planning but not yet constructed.

Evidence of engagement with providers of CPPAs is noted.

The applicant invites a condition with regard to CPPAs to be in place prior to the operational stage of the development. It is considered however, that such agreements should be in place prior to the commencement of development and in line with recent planning decisions.

Gas connection

As per previous report/assessment, the project will require a physical connection to the gas network to supply the on-site gas turbines as there is currently no adequate (high-pressure) gas main close to the site. This requires an upgrade to the gas network infrastructure which is likely to involve the construction of a new circa 300mm dia. high pressure gas pipeline. Gas Networks Ireland will be responsible for providing the required infrastructure. The applicant is **not** seeking planning permission to carry out these works as part of the application. It is however seeking permission for an Above Ground Installation (AGI) to regulate the gas supply to the turbines.

The applicant re-submits a Gas Networks Ireland Infrastructure Upgrade Outline Report (Dec 2023) prepared by its own Consulting Engineers to indicate the infrastructure upgrade works required to construct a new high pressure gas distribution pipeline from the existing AGI at Glebe West c.9.5km south east of the subject site. It is noted that the existing high pressure pipework is via a 150mm dia. pipeline. The upgrade would provide for a 300mm high pressure dia. pipeline.

The report notes that the final design of the upgrade works is subject to GNI design specifications, and the works will be undertaken by GNI. The report identifies the most likely route for the new high-pressure gas distribution pipeline and describes the works that are required to provide same. It suggests the most likely route and a description of the works. The suggested route involves crossing the Bluebell Stream further away from the site, crossing under the Grand Canal, under the M7 motorway (via horizontal directional drilling) and crossing through agricultural lands and then along the public roads. It suggests a construction period of 7-12 months.

The applicant notes that the supply of gas will be via Gas Networks Ireland's supply of natural gas. It is submitted that GNI proposes to decarbonise the gas network by 2050 by injecting renewables (biomethane), abated natural gas and hydrogen into the network over time. A biomethane gas injection point is proposed to allow for sustainable gas to be inputted for use in the turbines at a future date.

The proposed development is dependent upon the delivery of additional infrastructure to be readily available to serve it. The applicant has made a formal application to Gas Networks Ireland for a natural gas connection and this application remains live. Any such works to provide an appropriate gas supply

to the site will be subject to a separate application and consent process. Notwithstanding this, there is no available provision in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to refuse permission on the basis of a deficiency within the gas network infrastructure, unlike for deficiencies in water and/or sewerage infrastructure.

The supply of biomethane gas to the site is anticipated however there are significant constraints on the production of same due to the absence of injection points into the gas network and lack of appropriate economic conditions to support the development of projects to supply biomethane (anaerobic digesters). The current volume of biomethane supply is 1%. The strategy notes that there are currently 20 projects with planning permission awaiting progression.

The proposed development seeks to secure 0.08TWh by 2030 or 1% of Government target. The supply will be sought via a process similar to CPPA.

District Heating

A 340.5 sq m district heating building is proposed as part of the development.

Each of the data centre buildings will have either two or three CCGT (Closed Cycle Gas Turbines), all with waste heat thermal boilers installed within their exhaust flues to recover the medium to high grade heat from the turbines. Normally the heat will be taken to a steam turbine to allow additional electricity capacity to be generated. As an alternative to the heat being used to run the steam turbines, it is proposed that the heat could be used to supply an off-site district heating system. The heat from the thermal boilers from each building could be pumped via heat exchangers to the perimeter of the data centre campus, to enable district heating pipework to be connected.

Note: there seems to be some interchanging reference to CCGT referring to combined cycle in some instances and to closed cycle in others – this is noted throughout the submitted documentation.

There is no currently available district heating infrastructure available at present in the Naas area to avail of the waste heat generated by the proposed development.

The response is accompanied by an updated Feasibility Assessment for a District Heating Network indicating areas within the vicinity of the site and west of Naas that could benefit from waste heat.

The report indicates that each turbine as a nominal electrical output rating of 5MWe, the available maximum heat output is assumed at 10MWth per turbine, the District Heating network heat exchangers will be sized to provide a total capacity of 20MWth when the CCGT turbines are available and running. These turbines will be prioritised in terms of running whenever possible.

It is envisaged that with all phases completed that there will be an annual power demand from the onsite generation of around 100MW. It is acknowledged that

this load is unlikely to be present on the first operational day, with a phased approach being employed by the data centre developer and this will have to be taken into account in any detailed district heating assessment.

The report identifies 4 separate areas in the vicinity site that could potentially receive waste heat from the site – The M7 Business Park, Osberstown Business Park, Millennium Park and the Northwest Quadrant. The Northwest Quadrant has been identified by Kildare County Council as a key area for development with potential for a mix of densities of residential development, educational facilities, community facilities and small/medium enterprise.

It is estimated that the total length of the proposed district heating network would be in the order of 10km with flow and return pipework. Pipework of up to 300mm in diameter plus insulation will need to be installed into trenches of varying widths.

In order to provide heat to these heat loads, extensive flow and return pipework will be required to be laid throughout the west of Naas, it is estimated that the total length of pipework could be as much as 10km and would need roads and paved areas to be used for trenching. All of this will be subject to further studies and more detailed proposals. The study estimates the cost to provide the district heating network in excess of €20million and that a long term assessment would be needed to show that the scheme offers potential benefits to a heat network operator.

The report makes a number of recommendations for the next steps forward, involving further discussions with owners of existing facilities, owners of business parks and operators, KCC regarding plans for the Northwest Quadrant, reassessment of heat loads for identified facilities, consideration of alternative facilities or buildings including agricultural facilities, establish phasing for the delivery of the district heat network, review installation techniques, traffic impact assessments, engage with district heating operators to establish interest, recalculate heat load capacities to provide an assessment of the amount of saved carbon, engage specialist engineering installers for cost and schedule assessments for each phase of the district heating system.

The report concludes that subject to further consultations, the provision of waste heat to the wider Naas area in the vicinity of the site, is feasible. Kildare County Council is identified as a key stakeholder in delivering district heating.

Grid connection

Ultimately the development must be connected to the grid to avail of importation to and/or exportation from the site.

A 110kV Gas Insulated Substation is proposed to be located at the north west corner of the site. The substation is anticipated to provide the grid connection on site, formed from the breaking into and partial undergrounding of the existing 110kV overhead line, currently traversing the site. The substation and undergrounding of the 110kV overhead lines are subject of a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) planning application to An Coimisiun

Pleanála as it involves changes to electricity transmission and is considered strategic infrastructure.

The provision of the substation and grid connection will enable the export of energy generated onsite to the wider network. The substation will also enable the energy storage facility to be connected to the national grid and will allow import from the renewable energy sources via CPPAs.

The design and technical specification of the GIS and 110kV connection are largely influenced by Egrid requirements and standard arrangements.

Permission for the substation must be granted and operational before the proposed data centre development can avail of a grid connection.

The Gas Network upgrade is also required to be in place prior to the operation of the data centre. The provision of the required infrastructural upgrade is subject to a separate consent procedure.

Appropriate conditions would need to be attached to any grant of permission for this data centre development regarding future grid and gas connection.

On site battery storage provides a back-up energy source for on -site activity and will also have capacity to export energy to the grid or store energy from the grid when required. The grid connection is intended to be an Autoproducer connection, enabling on site electricity generation to participate in the wholesale electricity market.

Assessment of the proposed energy proposals

The applicant's response to Further Information has been examined and reviewed by Codema, Dublin's Energy Agency, with specific regard to energy and sustainability to provide advice to the Planning Authority in its assessment of the proposed development. Codema is a not-for-profit CLG, owned by the Dublin Local Authorities. Codema has developed expertise in the areas of local and regional energy planning and has been working with Local Authorities and their planning departments on such topics for more than 10 years. Codema has also been engaging closely with Data Centres, given their proliferation around the Dublin region in particular seeking to increase their energy efficiency and sustainability by utilising the waste heat which they produce.

The Codema report notes that the further information does not change the fundamental design of the proposal and it would still consume vast amounts of gas from the gas network. The proposed decarbonisation pathway identified in the further information with a heavy reliance on the use of hydrogen, is not in line with national policy as set out in the National Hydrogen Strategy.

The proposed use of 0.08Twh of biomethane at the site is noted to be a significantly small proportion of the gas demand. The application appears to rely on hydrogen as the decarbonisation pathway for onsite electricity generation, rather than the originally suggested reliance on biomethane and assumes in its emissions modelling that the turbines would use 100% hydrogen

by 2039. This approach is considered to be problematic given (a) it is unrealistic for the applicant to achieve a gas blend on site that has more than 10-20% of hydrogen blended into it and (b) it would be contrary to the national hydrogen strategy that states that the use of hydrogen as a primary energy source for large electricity users, such as data centres is considered a low priority end use, as the direct supply of electricity from renewable sources will be more efficient.

With regard to the Draft CRU policy on Large Energy Users, there is a concern that the proposed development is not in line with the provisions of the draft policy with regard to dispatchable generation or storage on site or nearby that participates in the wholesale electricity market. The applicant's contention that the on-site generation will participate in the demand side management process is not considered to be participating in the wholesale electricity market in the way described in the draft policy which involves participation via the energy and capacity markets. Furthermore, there is a concern that the proposed development is not a stand-alone, generator, separately metered in a centralised energy centre style design.

While Codema remains of the opinion that the proposed development as revised is not in line with relevant national and county policy, it is considered that there would be scope for the development to obtain a connection to the national grid to meet the **full electrical load** of the development, with back up generation via the on-site gas turbines, only to be used during time of constraint or in emergency situations. This would require the applicant to formally engage with Eirgrid prior to the commencement of development.

While the applicant has indicated an intention to sign up to the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact, it is suggested that the developer be formally required to do same via condition and this would be in line with the provisions of Objective EC O61 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

Fire Hazard Analysis

A revised Fire Hazard Analysis Report has been received with the response to Further Information. The report provides details regarding means of escape, fire service access, external and internal fire spread, fire safety systems, battery energy storage, generators/turbines. The Report uses National Fire Protection Association standards (USA) as a basis for assessing the proposal.

The Chief Fire Officer has examined the details and subject to conditions is satisfied with the applicant's response to the matters raised.

11.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (incl Addendum to EIAR)

The planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report in three Volumes.

Volume 1 – Main Text

Volume 2 – Appendices

Volume 3 – Design Drawings

The EIAR also includes a separate Non Technical Summary document.

The EIAR has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive, following its amendment in 2014, transposed into Irish law with the enactment of a number of implementing legislative measures, including in particular the EU European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 (SI 296 of 2018), which came into effect on the 1st September 2018 and gave effect to Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by the EIA Amendment Directive.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared in accordance with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018).

The aim of this EIA is to identify and assess the effects of the proposed development on various environmental factors, in order to assist in considering whether it is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. An assessment of the adequacy of the information contained in the planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is therefore required.

The contents of a number of the chapters of the EIAR are more pertinent to the competent internal departments of the Planning Authority. This EIA has therefore been informed by reports received from the Planning Authority's internal departments. In the interest of clarity and legibility it is proposed to structure this EIA in line with the sequencing of the information contained in the EIAR. It is not the intention of this EIA report to summarise the content of the EIAR, but rather to address the information contained therein in a direct and succinct manner.

11.2 CONTEXT OF EIAR (incl. Addendum)

Chapter 1 of the EIAR advises that Data Centre is not identified as a standalone class of development in either Annex I or Annex II to the EIA Directive, or in Schedule 5 to the 2001 Regulations for the purposes of EIA.

However, the application is accompanied by an EIAR given that the project constitutes "urban development" and therefore falls within Class 10 (b)(iv) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 to the 2001 Regulations, which is: Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built up urban area and 20 hectares elsewhere.

The EIAR received with the application comprises an assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed Data Centre and the separately assessed Substation and associated infrastructure.

Competent Experts

RPS Group Limited has been commissioned by the applicant to complete the planning application submission and coordinate and complete the EIAR. RPS

indicates that it has used reasonable care, skill and diligence in compiling the report. The production of the EIAR has been co-ordinated by RPS and the EIAR Project Team is provided at Table 1.5 of the EIAR. Section 1.5.1 outlines the experience and qualifications of each member of the project team.

Planning Authority Comments

It is a requirement that the EIAR must be prepared by competent experts and that a list of names of all the experts contributing to the various sections of the report, together with details of their competency is provided. The EIAR project team has been identified together with the various chapters they contributed to and this is considered appropriate.

The need for an Addendum to the EIAR is indicated as required arising from the design changes and enhancements proposed in response to the request for further information.

11.3 REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED (No change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 2 of the EIAR identifies and outlines the alternatives considered for the Project.

Alternatives presented in the EIAR include:

- The Do Nothing Scenario
- Local site selection
- Alternative site layouts and structure design and consideration of alternative renewable technologies

A number of iterations of the site layout have been presented in the EIAR. The Planning Authority acknowledges that the design of the proposal and the various alternative designs and layouts have been influenced by a number of factors/constraints including the Bluebell Stream / southern boundary of the site; retention of existing vegetation, particularly at the site boundaries; setback from the M7 motorway to the eastern boundary; exclusion zones associated with existing 220kV powerline.

Given the zoning of the lands and the provisions of the Naas LAP which states that *The Council will not consider any alternative use on these lands, other than those associated with Data Centres*, there is no presented alternative to a Data Centre on the lands.

Planning Authority Comments

Chapter 2 of the EIAR is noted and the approach adopted is acceptable.

Note: Chapter 3 – Project Scoping and Consultation – formal pre-planning engagement with KCC and An Bord Pleanála re: SID. No EIA matters arising

11.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION (incl Addendum)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 4 of the EIAR describes the description of the project and the need for the project.

The project is a combination of the full planning application to Kildare County Council and the proposed Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) to An Bord Pleanála, both on behalf of the applicant, Herbata Ltd.

The Data Centre Application – comprises 6 no. two storey Data Centre buildings, an administration/management building, car parking, landscaping, energy infrastructure and other associated works. These elements are the subject of the revised planning application in response to the request for further information.

The Substation Application – comprises a grid substation and 110kV transmission connection. These elements are subject of the SID application to An Coimisiun Pleanála.

The Chapter outlines the characteristics of the project including a description of the site, provides an overview of the project, a description of the data centre buildings and processes, an overview of the energy strategy, including a description of the gas turbines, gas connections, gas engines, battery energy storage system, off site renewable energy, electrical grid connection, solar PV, heat recovery and district heating. A description of the ancillary buildings is also provided.

The addendum provides details and description of the design amendments and a rationale for the amendments to Data Centre 4.

The description also includes details of proposed drainage and water supply for the site, proposed telecommunications and data connections, proposed revised road works including works along the R409, internal access roads, car parking, bicycle parking, temporary construction access, proposed lighting and security. Boundary treatment and landscaping proposals are also described including details of proposed landscaping and ecological mitigation including the provision of mammal passes within the fencing. Details of the construction phase are referred to in the Chapter, with specific reference to the technical specifications as set out at Volume 2 of the EIAR. A detailed phasing programme is also described, with the project to be completed in three phases.

Decommissioning is not envisaged, given the permanent nature of the development.

The Chapter also provides details regarding the need for the project.

Planning Authority Comments

The proposed development is fully detailed and adequately described in the EIAR.

11.5 BIODIVERSITY (incl Addendum)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 5 of the EIAR assesses the likely significant effects of the proposed development on biodiversity and ecology via the presentation of an Ecological

Impact Assessment (EclA). The chapter includes a detailed description of the methodology used, the guidance, legislative and planning policy context within which the assessment has been undertaken. Details of an assessment of the baseline ecological receptors including reports, studies and surveys conducted, with an assessment of the impacts of the construction and operational phases of development on the ecological receptors and proposals to mitigate the potential impacts arising are presented.

The Addendum indicates that none of the design amendments, with the exception of mammal passes have an impact on the submitted biodiversity impacts set out in the EIAR. Reference is made to the submission of a Natura Impact Statement as part of the further information documentation.

Details of the proposed amendments to and locations of fencing to allow for mammals to pass through the site are indicated.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

There will be a loss of the existing baseline on site. Habitat loss includes loss to varying degrees, of improved agricultural grassland, amenity grassland, dry neutral grassland, dry meadows and grassy verges, wet grassland, large sedge swamps, tilled land, an orchard, scrub, loss of buildings, hardstanding and seasonally wet drainage ditches, amenity planting within the gardens, hedgerows, treelines and scattered trees.

There will be some works required to the Bluebell Stream watercourse including installation of fibre connection and foul sewer crossing and the installation of a culvert to facilitate secondary access to the site. This has potential to impact the local level ecological value of the watercourse.

Protected species including otter, birds, bats and white clawed crayfish are assessed, with anticipated impacts on otter not considered to be relevant in this location. Habitat loss is likely to impact birds and bats on site. Works to Bluebell Stream, could give rise to impacts on white-clawed crayfish downstream of the site.

Impacts on designated sites

The site is hydrologically connected to a number of European sites within Dublin Bay, via the Bluebell Stream and the River Liffey, including the South Dublin Bay SAC and North Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and North Bull Island SPA.

The Addendum references the Natura Impact Statement submitted as a standalone document with the response to further information and notes the conclusion of same that the project will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

Mitigation measures

Landscaping, protection of retained habitats, delivery of compensatory planting, SUDS features with planting, species rich grassland planting, green roofs, pollinator friendly planting. Water pollution prevention measures.

Bat roosts – NPWS derogation/roost exclusion licence, adherence to seasonal requirements, provision of bat root boxes in 4 no. locations on site. Ecological Clerk of Works retained to advise, works in accordance with lighting strategy.

Provision of mammal passes within the fencing on site.

Site clearance, in addition to demolition of buildings, will take place during the period 1st September to 28th February which is outside the breeding season for those bird species that are likely to breed on the site.

Residual effects

Minor adverse significant effects on habitats and short term minor adverse impacts on bats. prior to establishment of compensatory planting – fully mitigated long term.

Cumulative effects

No significant cumulative effects.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

No loss of habitat or other impacts to terrestrial habitats are envisaged during the operational phase. Possible impacts on lowland river habitats via the Bluebell Stream, due to inadvertent release of pollutants and sediments within surface water runoffs or inappropriate discharge of foul water.

Impacts on protected species during operation are negligible regarding bird and bat species, with potential for minor adverse impact on white-clawed crayfish downstream of the site due to potential impacts on lowland river habitats.

Impacts on designated sites

The site is hydrologically connected to a number of European sites within Dublin Bay, via the Bluebell Stream and the River Liffey, including the South Dublin Bay SAC and North Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and North Bull Island SPA.

Operational phase impacts to the aquatic environment are limited to those associated with pollution and sedimentation arising as a result of contaminated surface water run-off in addition to the inappropriate discharge of foul water into the aquatic environment.

The Addendum references the Natura Impact Statement submitted as a standalone document with the response to further information and notes the conclusion of same that the project will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation as set out in Chapter 7 Water and Hydrology, provisions of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), design measures to ensure surface water run-off is maintained at greenfield run off rates, including SUDS features, to include petrol interceptors, foul water to Osberstown WWTP.

Proposed mitigation planting and SUDs features within the site to provide opportunities for breeding birds during the operational phase of the Project.

Planning Authority Comments

The EIAR has presented and detailed the proposed impacts and mitigation measures for biodiversity. The submission of a Natura Impact Statement has addressed concerns previously expressed and the conclusion contained therein is noted.

There are concerns with regard to the ecological impact of the loss of trees and hedgerows within the site including loss of townland boundary.

11.6 LAND AND SOILS (No change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 6 of the EIAR sets out the impacts of the proposed development on soils, geology and hydrogeology. The Chapter is informed by initial desk study assessment, followed up by geotechnical and environmental investigations.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Soil excavation, stripped soil disturbance and erosion, runoff from stockpiles, impact on waterbodies, dust from demolition works, excavations, dewatering requirements to maintain dry working conditions, noise/vibration, rock breaking equipment, surface/groundwater contamination associated with construction.

Mitigation measures

Design of pond and foundations to a minimum depth, minimum excavation requirements, to reduce extent / volume of soil, exportation of waste soil to licensed facilities, close to site. Adherence to measures set out in CEMP – reduce, reuse, recycle – use of soil in earthworks and excavated material direct to haulage. Control of water runoff during construction.

Residual impact

Slight negative short-term impact - unavoidable given the nature, requirement and design of the development.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Limited impact on geological environment. Mitigation by design.

Mitigation measures

Proposal is designed to mitigate any soil contamination which may occur during the operational phase – this includes bunding of all chemical and fuel containers, discharge of waste water to the foul drainage network, containment

of firefighting water run-off in detention ponds and the provision of oil and fuel interceptors on drainage networks.

Residual impact

Negative, permanent imperceptible on local and regional geological environment. Not significant.

Cumulative impact

Other projects in the area and potential gas network infrastructure upgrade. No predicted negative significant cumulative effects on land and soil.

Planning Authority Comments

Having regard to the findings of this chapter of the EIAR, to the mitigation measures, cumulative impacts and residual impacts identified, it is considered that the proposed development will not result in a significant adverse impact on the environment in terms of land, soils and geology.

While there would not appear to be any proposed importation or exportation of material for the bulk of the earthworks, the Planning Authority Environment Section notes that the importation of waste soil and stone requires prior authorisation under the Waste Management Act 1996 (as amended) and a condition to this effect is recommended.

11.7 WATER AND HYDROLOGY (no change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 7 of the EIAR assesses the potential impact of the development on the receiving water quality environment and Water Framework Directive (WFD) compliance.

The chapter provides a baseline assessment of the environmental and legislative setting of the development in terms of hydrology and water quality, protected sites and the studies and surveys undertaken and discusses the potential likely significant effects of the construction and operation of this development.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Temporary impacts on water quality have the potential to occur during the construction phase of the works via construction, cut and fill operations, surface water runoff, impact on water quality via accidental release of alkaline contaminants, works machinery, on land operations, storage of materials.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation by design – wastewater and surface water proposals including SUDS measures. Implementation of CEMP measures – based on international guidelines. Prevention of runoff to prevent sediment. Control of concrete and cement usage to prevent entry to water course. Site management controls. Demolition method statement. Monitoring of mitigation measures on site.

Residual impact

Imperceptible. Not significant.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Storm water run off contamination, foul sewerage connection issues, capacity of sewer network, impact on hydromorphology of water bodies.

Mitigation measures

Foul water piped/discharge to Irish Water foul sewer – via Osberstown WWTP. Onsite pumping stations. Separate surface and foul water systems. Incorporated SUDS measures into design. Monitoring and inspection of measures on site.

Residual impact

Imperceptible. Not significant.

Cumulative impact

Other projects in the area and potential gas network infrastructure upgrade. No predicted negative significant cumulative effects on water and hydrology.

Planning Authority Comments

The Planning Authority Water Services Section has noted that there is a discrepancy in the submitted Qbar indicated in the design information. Further information in relation to the surface water management system will be required using revised data and flood risk assessment to ensure that there is adequate capacity in the proposed network so that no additional residual risks are generated on the site and downstream of the site.

The Environment Section of the Planning Authority has no specific concerns regarding the Water and Hydrology Chapter of the EIAR. A condition is recommended with regard to submission of a Construction Phase Surface Water Management Plan in accordance with the IFI Guidelines on protection of fisheries during construction works and adjacent to waters. Furthermore, a condition with regard to discharge of silt laden water and consultation under Water Pollution Act 1977 is also applied.

11.8 AIR QUALITY (no change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 8 of the EIAR provides details of the potential air quality impacts associated with the development. It sets out the legislative context, the relevant guidance available and the methodology used including construction stage and operational stage. Details of modelling used in the assessment are also provided. A baseline environment is presented including details of the sensitive receptors in the area.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Construction dust via demolition, earthworks, construction. Nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter due to vehicular movements to and from site.

Mitigation measures

Dust Management Plan. Communications strategy including community engagement. Site management during construction including provision for earthworks, construction, vehicle movement and vehicle emissions,

Residual impact

Construction stage impacts short in duration. Upon completion - no further impact on the local environment. Short term, localised minor impact.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Atmospheric pollutant concentrations from DC buildings. Findings based on Atmospheric Dispersion Modelling System (ADMS). *Note: The EIAR indicates that conservative assumptions were made when determining the input data for the air quality modelling assessment and the approach used in the study leads to an over estimation of the actual levels that will arise.*

Mitigation measures

Design and best practice measures to reduce emissions – reuse and recycling, solar pv, LED lighting, tree planting

Residual impact

Predicted impact from the operational phase on air quality - not significant, negligible, long term impact.

Cumulative impact

Other projects in the area and potential gas network infrastructure upgrade. No predicted negative significant cumulative effects on air quality.

Planning Authority Comments

The Environment Section has noted the contents of the EIAR and has not raised any specific concern with regard to air quality. A condition is recommended for best practicable means to be used by the developer/operator to prevent/minimise dust emissions to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

11.9 NOISE AND VIBRATION (incl Addendum)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 9 of the EIAR provide details of the noise and vibration impact assessment of the development. The chapter sets out the relevant guidance for the assessment of noise and vibration and the potential impacts arising from such a development. Baseline surveys are presented.

The Addendum provides details on the proposed design amendments including amendments to Data Centre 4, where it is noted that there will be a reduction in noise arising due to the reduction equipment required for the smaller footprint. Details of the revised gas turbine type and numbers are also indicated.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Construction noise and vibration over a c. 9 year period. Demolition, vegetation clearance, earthworks, piling/excavation, sub structure, super structure and fit out. Construction traffic noise.

Mitigation measures

Noise mitigation measures for machinery and equipment, exhaust silencers, quiet plant and machinery, location of plant behind barriers, away from sensitive locations, audible warning system volume to be set to minimum. Limited construction hours. Consultation with residents for piling and demolition works. Noise Management Plan, CEMP.

Residual impact

With construction mitigation measures in place the noise impact of construction activities is predicted to be reduced to temporary minor / moderate.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Operational plant and equipment – data hall cooling systems, intake fans, exhaust fans, power generation including gas turbines including exhaust stack, battery storage invertors. 24/7 operation. Operational road traffic noise.

Additional noise sources include steam turbines and air-cooled condensers – not found to be significant. Predicted daytime and night time levels to stay the same or reduce. Maximum increase of 0.2dB not considered significant.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation by design – select plant and equipment., noise control at source, construction materials, orientation of buildings on site. Controlled use of gas turbines/engines during night. Routine maintenance including testing and servicing limited to daytime.

Residual impact

Negligible/low with minor significance.

Cumulative impact

The construction phase of the proposed Gas Networks Ireland Gas Connection has the potential to have a cumulative noise impact with the construction of the Data Centre and Substation and therefore a cumulative construction noise impact assessment has been carried out. Significant cumulative construction effects could arise if works take place concurrently, however these are expected to impact receptors in the short-term only. Combined construction noise effects should be taken into consideration when developing the construction noise management plan.

Planning Authority Comments

The Environment Section has noted the contents of the EIAR. Noise conditions are recommended at both construction and operational stages including the submission of Noise Study within 3 months of the development being in full operation and at any other time, should the Council so wish and after a period of 1 year of the development being operational.

11.10 CULTURAL HERITAGE (incl Addendum)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 10 of the EIAR presents the results of the assessment of the impact of the development on Cultural Heritage. Assessment is based on desk top study and site inspection, including geo-physical survey. The chapter sets out the legislative and planning context including local planning policies.

The Addendum references the previously unrecorded sub-surface archaeological remains (Enclosure) and the intention to retain it in situ by amending the design of Data Centre Building 4. The area preserved in situ is surrounded by a 10m exclusion zone extending from the outer edge of the identified enclosure feature. The exclusion will be fenced-off and remain an exclusion zone throughout both the construction phase and operational phase of the project.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Ground reduction, proximity to recorded monument, impact on previously unrecorded potential archaeological features.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation by avoidance, prevention, reduction and preservation in situ.

5m buffer around Fulacht Fia site, fenced off until all construction completed.

10m buffer around Enclosure fenced off during construction and operational phase.

Archaeological supervision during construction.

Preservation by photographic record of the agricultural buildings prior to demolition.

Photographic surveys of townland boundary removal.

Residual impact

Moderate range of significance of effect in the context of residual impacts on the unrecorded archaeological resource.

Potential Impact – Operational Phase

No direct effects identified.

Mitigation measures

Mitigation by design. Preservation of Fulacht Fia in situ as undeveloped green space, with 5m buffer from outer edge the archaeological site to be maintained.

Preservation of Enclosure in situ with 10m buffer and fenced off.

Residual impact

No cultural heritage mitigation measures requiring monitoring are predicted during the operational phase. No residual impact on any archaeological or cultural heritage feature. Archaeological sites retain no surface expression and, therefore, no residual indirect impacts on their setting are predicted to arise during the operational phase of the development. Access to these greenspace areas for maintenance (grass cutting) shall be maintained throughout the operational phase.

Cumulative Impact

Other projects in the area and potential gas network infrastructure upgrade. No predicted negative significant cumulative effects on cultural heritage. Subject to appropriate design and mitigation it is not likely that there be any negative significant cumulative effects on cultural heritage in combination with these external plans/projects.

Planning Authority Comments

The EIAR Addendum has provided greater assurances through revised design and processes to ensure the previously unrecorded archaeological feature can be retained on site and protected from impacts. Concern regarding loss of architectural heritage on site including townland boundary.

11.11 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL (incl Addendum)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 11 of the EIAR identifies and presents the effects of the development on landscape character, landscape features, visual receptors and visual amenity. The assessment is carried out with regard to best practice methodology and in accordance with relevant guidance. A detailed description of the baseline including local landscape policies and designation informs the study.

The Addendum presents details of landscape and visual impacts arising from the revised design to Data Centre Building 4, updated viewpoints and additional viewpoints requested at further information and minor footpath/cycle amendments along the R409, traversing M7 Motorway.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Introduction of built industrial scale elements into the landscape. Clearance of site, visibility of plant and equipment including cranes during construction.

Mitigation measures

LCA designation – Northern Lowlands = low sensitivity = high compatibility in the Northern Lowlands landscape. Design respects scale of built form in its immediate surroundings.

Residual impact

Minor adverse impact.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Visual impact of the development from within the surrounding landscape. Predicted visual impacts range from moderate to minor to negligible, to no change. Glint and Glare – solar PV panels at roof level. Lighting impacts. Potential increase in sky glow in the surrounding landscape.

Mitigation measures

Siting, design and screening of development via existing and proposed vegetation. Retention and protection of trees on site. Landscape Management Plan. Design of DC roof parapet, predicted to screen the solar panels – no mitigation proposed. “Dark Site” – minimal lighting when required. Avoidance of light spill. Use of appropriate lighting mechanisms.

Residual impact

1 no. viewpoint out of 15 no. views has a moderate impact at operational stage.

Cumulative impact

No significant cumulative effects for the development, with other projects in the area and the GNI Gas Connection.

Planning Authority Comments

The Planning Authority considers that the EIAR and Addendum has sufficiently detailed and presented the impact of the proposal on the landscape character of the area.

11.12 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION (incl Addendum)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 12 of the EIAR provides details regarding the transportation impacts of the development. The chapter reports on the likely environmental effects, the further mitigation measures which may be required to prevent, reduce or offset any adverse effects or further enhance the beneficial effects. Assessment findings are presented with regard to relevant national planning policy and guidance.

The Addendum references the proposed revisions to the traffic/transportation aspects of the project including R409 improvements.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Increase in traffic. Construction site access via R409. HGV movements into and out of site at c.47 no. vehicles per day, equating to 6 no. per hour and c.1 no. every 10 minutes. 1,100 staff during construction, c.425 vehicles per day and c.175 vehicle trips during peak AM and PM hours.

Mitigation measures

No proposed mitigation upon the surrounding road network. The development is served by existing motorways and regional roads which can accommodate the predicted levels of traffic during the construction phase.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Traffic generation. Traffic movements into and out of site. Staff total 225 persons with 125-175 visitors per day, operational HGVs c.26 total trips per day.

Mitigation measures

No proposed mitigation upon the surrounding road network. The development is served by existing motorways and regional roads which can accommodate the predicted levels of traffic during the operational phase.

Residual impact

Residual impact is associated with the operational phase and is indicated to be low.

Cumulative Impact

A number of other projects have been identified for consideration in terms of their potential for cumulative effects. Many of these projects are associated with the commercial and industrial complexes located to the north and south of the development site. The subject development will not result in any negative significant cumulative effects on cultural heritage in combination with these external plans/projects. Works for the gas pipeline unlikely to result in significant impact on existing traffic.

Planning Authority Comments

An analysis and review by the KCC Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department has found that the proposed development as revised would not appear to represent a detrimental effect on the public and national road network during the construction phase or during the operational phase.

11.13 MATERIAL ASSETS – BUILT SERVICES (no change)

ElAR Findings

Chapter 13 of the ElAR presents details of the assessment of impacts on existing material assets and built services arising from the development. The assessment is based upon desk top study and pre-application consultations. The baseline environment is set out to include water services infrastructure, gas network infrastructure, ESB and EIR infrastructure and utility services.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Surface water – sediments, harmful substances, soil into watercourse; accidental spills, leakage from machinery, concrete and cement runoff, silt runoff.

Foul Water – no foul drainage network serving site – temporary provision on site during construction.

Water Supply - temporary provision on site for personnel.

Gas Networks Ireland – new gas main pipeline to be constructed.

New underground ESB line (associated with substation development).

Mitigation measures

Surface water – construction site water treatment – proprietary settlement tank with silt bag to intercept silt / solids – filtering process prior to collection. Run off interception on site, silt traps, discharge to ponds to act as temporary settlement structures. All works outside 10m riparian buffer of Bluebell Stream.

Foul water – pressure testing, CCTV surveys.

Water supply – watermain testing.

Gas connection – gas pipeline testing.

ESB – overhead lines and underground cables testing.

Fibre utility services – ductwork surveys and CCTV.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Surface water SUDS measures – designed for a greenfield run off rate.

Foul water – new foul drainage network, new pumping stations, pumped via rising mains to public foul drainage network – this is feasible.

Water supply – three types – Process water, Firefighting water and Potable water – supply via existing Uisce Eireann network.

Gas Networks Ireland – high pressure gas supply to supply turbines.

ESB utility services – excess power from gas turbines to feed back to substation.

Fibre utility services – network of onsite fibre routes to serve the buildings;

Mitigation measures

Surface water – managed in accordance with GDSDS, surface water attenuation and retention, surface water management to reduce impact and risk of flooding. SUDS measures to allow for cleaning all surface water prior to discharge to Bluebell Stream.

Foul drainage/Water Supply/Gas/ESB/Fibre Utilities – regular inspection and maintenance.

Residual Impacts

Positive, significant, long term impact on surface water.

Foul Water / Water supply – neutral, not significant.

Gas network – neutral, not significant.

ESB Utility Services / Fibre Utility Services - neutral, not significant.

Cumulative impact

A number of other projects in the locality which have been identified for consideration in terms of their potential for cumulative effects. Furthermore, the proposed gas connection route is also of relevance from a cumulative impact perspective. The EIAR concludes that there are no predicted negative significant cumulative effects on Material Assets - Built Services as a result of these external and associated projects.

Planning Authority Comments

It is considered that this chapter of the EIAR assesses the impact on material assets and is related to the other sections of the EIAR including the assessments, findings and mitigation measures. Fire safety matters are raised as a potential concern on material assets.

11.14 POPULATION (no change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 14 of the EIAR presents the results of the impact of the development on the population. Methodology includes reference to CSO population data, local population information sources and desk studies within a designated catchment of 1km and 3km of the site. Details are provided with regard to population, age, employment, social assets.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

No impact on population.

Impact on employment locally during construction.

No significant impact on social assets / childcare facilities.

Mitigation measures

None proposed.

Residual impact

None

Potential impact – Operational Phase

No impact on population.

225 employment jobs on site – key sector of economy;

No significant impact on social assets / childcare facilities.

Mitigation measures

None proposed.

Residual impact

None

Cumulative impact

No cumulative impacts on social or demographic characteristics of the population.

Planning Authority Comments

Having regard to the scale of the development, it is considered that the EIAR has presented an appropriate level of assessment of population, to include employment and social assets. Notwithstanding the large-scale nature of the development, the level of employment on site is relatively low and unlikely to significantly impact local population or employment levels.

11.15 HUMAN HEALTH (no change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 15 of the EIAR addresses the health impacts of the construction and operation of the development. The chapter takes a public health approach assessing the impacts on defined populations. The chapter follows guidance and good practice and draws inputs from other chapters of the EIAR. A range of health determinants are assessed. Baseline environment is presented in the context of the local health circumstances of the communities surrounding the site and include general health, life expectancy, physical health, mental health and deprivation.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Disruption to local traffic – public, private, active travel modes.

Increased vehicle movements – delays, health related travel times. Impact on vulnerable road users, increase in accident risk,.

Visual impact on community identity – landscape aesthetics.

Air quality impacts – dust, vehicle emissions,

Noise and vibration impacts – sleep disturbance, learning disruption,

Mitigation measures

Standard good practice measures to minimise disruption and disturbance.

Location and siting – only 1 view out of 15 has a moderate impact – screening by planting existing and proposed.

Dust Management Plan.

Implementation of appropriate construction hours, noise barriers and best practice measures agreed through the CEMP, Noise Management Plan.

Potential impact –Operational Phase

New footpaths and cycleways, active travel, physical health,
Visual impact on community identity – landscape aesthetics.
Opportunities for career development and upskilling – impact on socio economic health and well being. Increased employment opportunities.
Natural gas usage – factor of climate change.
Air quality impacts - combustion of natural gas during electricity generation, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), vehicles operating on site, particulate matter.
Water quality – management of large volumes of water for cooling, impacts on potable water.
Noise impacts – night time. Operational plant and equipment noise will occur continuously and long term (day and night).
Potential for mental health to be affected by worries re: Electro-magnetic field risk (EMF).

Mitigation measures

Location and siting – only 1 view out of 15 has a moderate impact – screening by planting existing and proposed.
Carbon mitigation measures in design. 30% energy from renewables, including solar and wind – reduce carbon emissions.
SUDS measures - efficient surface water management system, designed to mitigate rain run-off combined with rain harvesting design measures aimed at ensuring adequate drainage and treatment of site/stormwater runoff before discharge to the nearby watercourse.
Embedded design measures to reduce noise.
Implementation of relevant design guidelines of the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Consultation and sharing of information.

Mobility Management Plan, Construction Travel Management Plan, Workforce Management Plan,

Cumulative Impact

No new significant population health effects are expected due to the interaction of individual effects in any study area.

Planning Authority Comments

Having regard to the findings of the EIAR within this chapter, to the related chapters on Land/Soils, Water and Hydrology, Air Quality, Noise/Vibration, Landscape/Visual, Traffic and Transportation, Population and Climate Change and to the mitigation measures outlined within the various chapters, to the cumulative and residual impacts identified, it is considered that the EIAR has adequately addressed the potential impacts on human health.

11.16 CLIMATE CHANGE (incl Addendum)
EIAR Findings

Chapter 16 of the EIAR presents details of the assessment of the impact of the proposed development on and from climate change. The Chapter sets out the planning policy context and relevant legislative context and guidance available. The Chapter considers climate change as the impact of greenhouse gas emissions due to the development (GHG) and the potential risks to the development from a changing climate. The chapter also presents details of the “whole life” emissions arising from the development.

The Addendum presents revised details with regard to Greenhouse Gas emissions and the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings and revisions to likely emissions arising from the design changes / enhancements. The more likely emissions scenario for the construction and operation of the Project are presented to more accurately reflect the carbon emissions arising from the Project. A 20 year lifespan is assumed instead of the previously indicated 50 year lifespan.

Potential impact – Construction Phase

Effect of climate change – seasonal changes – working conditions.

GHG emissions – Construction emissions demolition, construction, solar PV, gas turbines, battery energy storage systems, servers, vehicle movements = embodied carbon.

Mitigation measures

Climate change – adaptations to work practices due to climate change.

GHG Carbon emissions – procure lower carbon products, increase commitment to recycling construction materials. Influence tenants regarding server procurement, repair, recycling.

Residual impacts

Minor adverse not significant.

Potential impact – Operational Phase

Climate change – Flood risk, high temperatures, storms, extreme weather, building damage, energy demand for cooling

GHG emissions – Operational emissions, indirect electricity usage, regulated and unregulated energy consumption emissions (24x7).

Mitigation measures

Climate change - Passive design, minimise excessive solar gain, solar reflection, adiabatic cooling system to allow for water storage

GHG emissions – mitigation by design and procurement; energy efficient units in fit out of building, air flow management measures.

Potential for waste heat to be used in local district heating.

Residual impacts

Minor adverse – not significant.

Whole of Life Impacts – Emissions

Electricity Sectoral Emissions Ceiling

Changes to the design and commitments will reduce operational emissions.

Project lifetime emissions = 1.78% of Sectoral Emissions Ceiling (Electricity) and 0.18% of Ireland's Carbon budget from 2026-2030, increasing to 0.8% from 2031-2035.

Given the inclusion of the emissions mitigation measures during both the construction and operational stages, whole life emissions have been assessed to have a minor adverse effect, that is not significant.

Cumulative impact

Gas pipeline - minor adverse effect during the construction phase, which is not significant.

Planning Authority Comments

The EIAR presents detailed descriptions of the likely emissions arising from the construction, operation and whole of life phases of the development.

The revised details include an analysis of revised emissions arising within the development vis a vis the Electricity Sectoral Emissions Ceiling and are shown to represent a more acceptable percentage of the Carbon Budget over the lifetime of the project.

It is considered however that the proposed development remains largely reliant on fossil fuel (gas) for the generation of electricity to power the site and that there are more suitable alternatives to this approach via full connection to the national grid. This would assist in the further reduction of emissions from the development.

11.17 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS AND INTERACTIONS (no change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 17 of the EIAR addresses the interaction between the various assessments presented in the EIAR. The information is presented in the form of An Inter-relationship Matrix – Potential Interaction between Environmental Disciplines and also a commentary on each of the individual sections.

Planning Authority Comments

This chapter of the EIAR is considered to be acceptable.

11.18 SUMMARY OF MITIGATION (no change)

EIAR Findings

Chapter 18 of the EIAR provides a description of the proposed mitigation measures identified under each of the foregoing chapters of the EIAR.

Planning Authority Comments

This chapter of the EIAR is considered to be acceptable.

11.19 EIA CONCLUSION

Having regard to the EIAR received with the application, it is considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment have been identified and examined. Mitigation of impacts are

required in most instances and these are considered to be acceptable, subject to supplementation where deemed appropriate.

The reports of the internal sections of the Planning Authority, external consultants and Prescribed Bodies have been considered and factored into this EIA.

12.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Appropriate Assessment is required under the Habitats Directive for any plan or project likely to have significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is submitted in response to the Planning Authority's request for Further Information.

The Statement sets out the legislative context and the approach taken to carry out an assessment including the methodology used, a description of the project and the assessment of potential effects on European Sites, with specific reference to the SACs and SPAs within Dublin Bay.

Potential impacts are listed to include habitat loss, diminution of water quality and habitat deterioration. A summary of potential impacts on conservation objectives is presented in tabular format. Details of potential in combination impacts is also presented in tabular format.

The statement references mitigation measures to be employed during the construction phase of the development including open-cut methodology, water pollution prevention measures, spill response and pollution control measures, storage protocols, surface water protection measures and operational wastewater storage/removal, storm water run off.

Subject to implementation of mitigation measures, there are no residual impacts, direct or indirect, envisaged that would affect the integrity of the European sites.

The Statement concludes that following an examination, analysis and evaluation of all relevant information, including in particular the nature of the predicted impacts from the Project and the effective implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, that the Project will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

Planning Authority Comments

The submission of a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment via Natura Impact Statement addresses the concerns arising in the original assessment. The applicant has presented the findings and conclusions in an appropriate manner and the conclusions set out in the Natura Impact Statement are noted and acceptable.

The NIS has also been reviewed by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage noting the mitigation measures as set out in the Statement. The Department is satisfied with the proposal subject to all mitigation measures outlined in the Natura Impact Statement (NIS), and all other relevant documents to be implemented in full. It is further recommended that a condition be attached to planning (should planning be granted), for an appropriately qualified Ecologist/Freshwater Biologist to be retained as an

Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) during any operations at the Bluebell Stream or any drainage ditches, and that a post-operation Mitigation Compliance Report is produced by the ECoW and submitted to Inland Fisheries Ireland and to the Local Authority for review.

13.0 CONCLUSION

Having regard to the location of the site on lands zoned specifically for a data centre, it is considered that the principle of the development is acceptable. However, in order for the development to be acceptable it must also be acceptable from a design, technical and environmental perspective and in turn, must accord with national, regional and local planning policies.

The proposed development has been assessed in accordance with national, regional and local planning policies including those related to climate action.

The revisions proposed by the applicant including revisions to the EIAR have been considered and their impacts assessed. The impact of the proposal on designated European Sites has been further assessed and considered to be acceptable.

It is considered however that there are some outstanding matters that would require further revision to the development. These include matters relating to:

- the source of electricity to power and support the data centre site,
- the scale of existing hedgerow removal within the development site to facilitate the development.

It is considered that these matters are capable of being addressed by condition in a manner that would be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Having regard to the foregoing report and assessment, it is recommended that permission be granted.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that permission be granted.

Schedule 1 - Considerations and Reasons on which this Decision is based as required by Article 31 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

Having regard to:

- The provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021;
- The Climate Action Plan 2025;
- The principles contained in the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Irelands Enterprise Strategy
- The National Planning Framework First Revision 2025;
- The land use zoning “P – Data Centre” and policies and objectives of the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027;
- The policies and objectives of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029;

- The revisions to the design and layout of the proposed development proposed at Further Information including revisions to EIAR;
- The conclusions set out in the Natura Impact Statement;
- The internal reports and advices received;

It is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions attached, the development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity and would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Schedule 2 - Conditions to apply.

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in its entirety in accordance with the plans, particulars and specifications received by the Planning Authority on 13/08/2024 as amended by significant further information and revised public notices received on 23/06/2025 and 26/06/2025 respectively except where altered or amended by conditions in this permission. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the Planning Authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of any development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and to ensure that the development shall be in accordance with the permission and that effective control be maintained.

2. This permission shall be for a period of **10 years** from the date of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and orderly development.

3. The mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) received by the Planning Authority on 13/08/2024 as revised by Addendum to EIAR received by the Planning Authority on 23/06/2025 and other plans and particulars submitted with the planning application, shall be implemented in full by the developer in conjunction with the timelines set out therein, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

4. (a) Prior to the commencement of development the developer shall submit, for the written approval of the Planning Authority, evidence to demonstrate formal engagement with Eirgrid and evidence of a formal grid connection from Eirgrid to cover the full electrical load of the development for all phases of the development. All electricity demand of the site will be met through this electrical connection. The onsite gas turbines, shall be used only in the following circumstances:

- (i) to provide backup power generation capacity for the development during times of electricity grid constraint, and as requested to do so by the Systems Operator
- (ii) as emergency power generation,
- (iii) to export electricity to the national grid in line with the relevant requirements of Eirgrid and the Commission of the Regulation of Utilities.

(b) Details of the electricity grid connection size received for the site, and expected annual running hours of onsite gas turbines shall be submitted to the planning authority prior to the commencement of construction. Construction shall not commence until the Planning Authority has expressed in writing that it is satisfied that a connection to the national electricity network to cover the full electrical load of the development has been obtained.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable data centre development in accordance with Objectives EC O59, EC O61, and policies RE P1, RE P12 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, and to ensure CPPAs can be effectively used to meet the majority of electricity demand of the development, in order to facilitate the developer meeting the requirements of the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact to which the developer will be a signatory.

5. Prior to commencement of development the developer shall submit evidence for the written approval by the Planning Authority that they are a signatory to and have signed the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact. Every two years thereafter, the developer shall provide evidence that demonstrates to the Planning Authority that the development is achieving the targets of the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact, regardless of the owner/operator of the development at the time.

The targets of the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact are as follows: Data centre electricity demand will be matched by 75% renewable energy or hourly carbon-free energy by December 31, 2025 and 100% by December 31, 2030. The use of PPAs shall be adopted to achieve 100% renewable power supply unless satisfactorily demonstrated that this is not possible.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable data centre development in accordance with Policy ECO61 and Objective RE O72 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

6. Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant shall submit for the written agreement of the planning authority, details of a Corporate Purchase Power Agreement that the developer has entered into, in accordance with the principles set out in the Renewable Electricity Corporate Power Purchase Agreements Roadmap (DECC, 2022). These principles require that the agreement should deliver additional GHG emissions reductions, not including existing renewable energy projects; are a complementary and separate funding source to the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) and therefore will assist in lowering electricity costs.

The Agreement shall specify the following:

- (a) The new renewable energy projects to be funded shall be located in Ireland and full details of these including consent details shall be provided.
- (b) The new renewable energy generation shall relate to energy that is not being generated at the date of grant of this permission.
- (c) The amount of electricity generated by the new renewable energy projects, shall be equal to or greater than, the electricity energy consumed from fossil fuel sources by the data centre in operation.

Reason: In the interest of climate adaptation and to ensure that the renewable energy sources to serve the development, are additional to current renewable energy projects and are sufficient, at a minimum, to offset the energy consumed by the development.

7. Prior to the commencement of development, the Applicant shall submit for the written agreement of the Planning Authority:

- 1. A detailed phasing programme for the delivery of the district heating building and network connections aligned with the phased delivery of the Data Centres.
- 2. A detailed report and drawings clearly demonstrating how the above phasing programme will be implemented.
- 3. A draft agreement shall be submitted to the Planning Authority which affirms that a connection to the future district heating network is feasible and has been facilitated.

Reason: To ensure that economic and enterprise related development is provided in a manner which facilitates a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and accelerates the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy and to promote net zero-carbon and carbon reduction in economic development through innovative design, low-carbon technology, use of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and roll out of district heating and other renewable energy projects and in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Data Centres DC 4, DC 5 and DC 6 and Protection of Townland Boundaries

8. Prior to the commencement of development, the following shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority:

- (a) Data Centre 4 (DC 4), which shall include all associated development works relating to its access, internal road network, offices and all infrastructural items, shall be realigned and relocated away from the Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) by a minimum of 10m (where the Townland Boundary traverses the north-east of the subject site in a north-west to south-east alignment).
- (b) Data Centre 5 and Data Centre 6 (DC 5 and DC 6), which shall include all associated development works relating to their access, internal road network, offices and all infrastructural items, shall be re-orientated and reduced in size, and shall be fully realigned so that both structures, DC 5 and DC 6 (and associated works), shall be

located entirely within the field network formed by the Townland Boundary, (Halverstown and Jigginstown) where the Townland Boundary traverses the central and southern sections of the subject site. Both the revised Data Centre 5 and 6 structures (including all associated works) shall be located a minimum of 10m from the Townland Boundary.

Reason: In order to protect the cultural and natural heritage of the County and in the interests of protecting foraging routes for bats and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) – Access and ‘Eco Hops’

9. Prior to the commencement of development, the following shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority:

(a) The two sections of the Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) which cross the site (to the north east and to the south east), shall be retained in situ and shall be augmented by increased planting.

(b) A **maximum of two vehicular accesses** shall be permitted through the section of Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) located to the south east of the site. Each vehicular access (including pathways / kerbs) shall be a maximum width of 5m.

(c) Where the Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) is penetrated to provide for the two vehicular entrances, the removal of the section of hedgerow shall be kept to a minimum (maximum of 5m) and mature planting shall be located at the gaps to create and augment ‘eco-hops’.

(d) All lighting shall be omitted from the ‘eco hop’ / vehicular accesses locations and all lighting shall be directed away from the entirety of the Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) on the site (to include both sections of the Townland Boundary, to the north east and to the south east).

(e) Items (a) through to (d) shall be reassessed by a fully qualified Bat Ecologist and a report that shall include a revised design shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In order to protect the cultural and natural heritage of the County and in the interests of protecting foraging routes for bats and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

Landscaping

10. The landscaping proposals shall be carried out within the first planting season following commencement of construction of the proposed development during the first phase of the works. Only native species of trees and hedgerow shall be planted. The landscaping and screening shall be maintained at regular

intervals. Any trees or shrubs planted in accordance with this condition which are removed, die, become seriously damaged or diseased within two years of planting shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those original required to be planted.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity, biodiversity and wildlife protection and to assist with integration of the development into the landscape.

11. Prior to the commencement of development, the following shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority:

- (a) The entirety of the Townland Boundary (Halverstown and Jigginstown) hedgerow (located to the south east of the site and located to the north east of the site) shall be fully retained in situ, except where permitted in Condition 8).
- (b) The 639m of native hedgerow to be planted, as outlined in the submitted landscaping plans, shall be planted within the first planting season following commencement of construction of the proposed development during the first phase of the works.
- (c) In addition to the requirement to retain planting on the site in Condition 10(a) and the requirement to provide planting under Condition 10(b), a minimum of an additional 1,440metres of linear hedgerow, that criss-crosses the entire site and links with the ponds and other linear water courses (provided for within the landscape and Surface Water Drainage drawings and other Conditions of this permission), shall be planted within the first planting season following commencement of construction of the proposed development during the first phase of the works.

Reason: In order to protect the cultural and natural heritage of the County, in the interests of protecting foraging routes for bats, in the interests of supporting Green Infrastructure, nature-based solutions and SUDS, which are Objectives of the County Development Plan and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

12. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit for the written agreement of the Planning Authority, full details in relation to all external finishes of all buildings on site including a rationale for the colours chosen for each specific data hall and building on site.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

- 13. a) No additional artificial lighting shall be installed or operated on site unless authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.
- b) Apart from construction related signage, no additional signage or advertising shall be erected on the lands or buildings, without a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of residential and visual amenity.

14. All service lines and cables servicing the proposed development shall be located underground except where otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of orderly development and visual amenities.

Natura Impact Statement (NIS) / Ecology – Mitigation

15. All mitigation measures outlined in the Natura Impact Statement (NIS), and all other relevant documents shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interest of natural heritage and the protection of designated European Sites.

16. A suitably qualified Ecologist/Freshwater Biologist shall be retained as an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) during any operations at the Bluebell Stream or any drainage ditches, and a post-operation Mitigation Compliance Report shall be produced by the ECoW and submitted to Inland Fisheries Ireland and to the Planning Authority for review and written agreement.

Reason: In the interest of ecological heritage protection.

17. Prior to the commencement of any works / development on the site the Applicant shall apply to the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) for the provision of a Derogation Licence and following that shall meet the requirements for same. The application for the Derogation Licence shall be prepared by a fully qualified Bat Ecologist prior to the submission to the NPWS. All shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development

Reason: In the interests of protecting natural heritage and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

18. All ponds constructed across the entire landholding shall be linked with running-watercourses and shall be designed to provide suitable habitat and substrates for aquatic species including Crayfish. The design of this linked water system shall be prepared by a suitably qualified aquatic ecologist and shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of Development.

Reason: In the interests of protecting natural heritage and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

19. Prior to the commencement of any construction works / site clearance works, including immediately prior to vegetation removal, an updated Badger Survey shall be carried out by an Ecologist/ECoW and submitted for the written

agreement of the Planning Authority. Should any new setts be judged to be prone to disturbance as a result of the proposed development, monitoring shall be carried out of setts using trail cameras to ascertain levels of usage. Impacts on Badgers shall be re-assessed at this time with reference to best practice guidelines and shall be incorporated into the mitigation measures for biodiversity.

Reason: In the interest of establishing if any setts have been constructed in the intervening period since the surveys were completed, in the interests of protecting fauna and ecological heritage and biodiversity protection and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

20. In accordance with best practice guidance and Section 40 of the Wildlife Act (1976) (as amended), all vegetation removal works shall be scheduled outside the nesting bird season, which is between 1st March and 31st August and any wetland habitat that is to be removed, shall be checked by the ECoW immediately prior to removal for any roosting birds. All to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development / clearance works.

Reason: In the interest of ecological heritage and biodiversity protection and in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

21. Any destruction of bat roosting sites or relocation of bat species shall be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist under a Derogation Licence granted by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Reason: In the interest of the protection of bats.

22. a) All buildings with bat roosting potential shall only be demolished in April or October and shall have a Dusk and Dawn Activity Survey immediately prior (i.e. the night/morning before) to demolition using Infrared (IR) technology and an endoscope search to ensure that roosting bats are not present.

b) All trees that are due to be felled for the proposed development, shall be resurveyed for any potential bat roost features that may have occurred since the surveys were completed. Any additional trees with bat roost features and those already identified, shall be inspected at height, using a tree climber/Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) (or whatever method is considered appropriate) immediately prior to felling, and shall only be carried out within April or October.

c) A schedule of monitoring to check for the presence of bats shall be implemented at regular intervals throughout the construction and operational phase and shall be incorporated into the mitigation measures.

d) Bat boxes shall be in place prior to any removal of buildings/trees, wherever possible within the site where they will not be disturbed by construction.

Reason: In the interest of the protection of bats.

23. Prior to commencement of development the applicant shall conduct a Crayfish Survey, prepared by a suitably qualified professional which shall

include detailed measures to be undertaken should the species be identified within the Bluebell Stream. Any proposed mitigation measures shall be included as additional mitigation for the protection of the species within the Bluebell Stream. The results of the survey and proposed mitigation shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for its information and written agreement prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of ecological and biodiversity protection.

24. Prior to commencement of development the applicant shall conduct an Otter Survey along the Bluebell Stream, prepared by an Ecological Clerk of Works which shall include detailed measures to be undertaken should Otter holt be identified. Any proposed mitigation measures shall be included as additional mitigation for the development and the results of the survey shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for its information and written agreement prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of ecological and biodiversity protection

25. The use of wildflower seed mixes within the site is not permitted. All proposed wildflower meadows shall be planted in accordance with the advice available at <https://pollinators.ie/wildflower-seed/expert-opinions/> and shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for written approval, prior to the commencement of development. The proposals shall also include details for the sowing of Yellow Rattle seeds (*Rhianthus minor*) within the proposed wildflower meadows, to complement/reuse the plant identified to the south west of the site.

Reason: To provide for and maintain natural grasslands on site and in the interest of ecological and biodiversity protection.

26. Amphibians shall be included in the mitigation measures to ensure adherence to the Wildlife Acts.

Reason: In the interest of ecological and biodiversity protection.

Cultural Heritage

27 (i) The newly identified archaeological monument/'enclosure feature' as reference in Addendum to Chapter 10 Cultural Heritage of the EIAR (dated June 2025) shall be preserved in situ in addition to the exclusion zones around it and the previously recorded protected monument (KD 019-028) to the south of the site.

(ii) To avoid any potential future damage to these features (for example, future landscape design alterations or routing of additional services to the areas in question), the applicant shall submit for the written agreement of the Planning Authority (Heritage Officer) detailing how the aforementioned sites shall be maintained/managed and how they shall be physically indicated, through appropriate boundary treatments, permanent information boards etc.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (in situ) of sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

28. (i) The method statement (Chapter 10 of EIAR, Section 10.5.3) for managing potential archaeology revealed during site clearance works shall be fully complied with for the duration of clearance works. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, topsoil stripping and groundworks within all other greenfield sections of the proposed development.
(ii) The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall include the location of any and all archaeological or cultural heritage constraints relevant to the proposed development as set out in Chapter 10 of the EIAR
(iii) The Planning Authority and the Department shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of all archaeological monitoring and any archaeological investigative work/excavation required, following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

Water Services

29. The proposed surface water drainage system shall be designed in terms of incorporating appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicant shall comply with the Kildare County Development Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Guidance Document and incorporate a sequence of SuDS techniques that work together in a Management Train to control the flow, volume and frequency of run-off as well as preventing or treating pollution as water flows through the development. SuDS design shall maximise nature-based solutions and the sustainable drainage systems shall be designed, inspected, and supervised by a qualified engineer who shall certify the works as compliant with regard planning compliance, design and construction. The sustainable drainage systems shall cater for the 1 in 100 year storm event (or as otherwise agreed in writing) and with an allowance of +30% in order to cater for "climate change". The applicant shall ensure that surface water from the development does not discharge to a point where neighbouring developments would be at risk of flooding. All to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In order to ensure proper servicing and to eliminate the potential impact of pluvial flood risk.

30. The Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Strategy and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Scheme Design detailed within the Report "Planning Engineering Report – Updated" carried out by HDR & Donnachadh O'Brien Associates, and outlined on planning-stage design drawings PROPOSED SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE – OVERALL REV P18 contained within the Planning Drawings Pack both received on 23/06/2025 shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure proper servicing of the development and to eliminate the potential impact of pluvial flood risk.

31. Prior to commencement of development, the Applicant shall submit a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Maintenance Plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The plan shall include a schedule of activities providing details and frequency of maintenance tasks required for all SuDS and Surface water drainage elements proposed. This maintenance regime shall have planned preventative and response elements and cover all emergency maintenance and repairs. The Applicant shall keep full records akin to the statutory 'Safety File' including paper, digital and photographic of all sustainable drainage systems. Records to include the operation, implementation and maintenance & repair of the sustainable drainage systems.

Reason: To ensure proper and sustainable servicing of the proposed development and to prevent pollution and flooding.

32. The applicant shall be responsible for repairing and reinstating any failures to the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) infrastructure designed and constructed in accordance with Planning Condition 1 and 2 above.

Reason: To prevent flooding and in the interests of sustainable drainage

33. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall clarify the operation of the proposed rainwater harvesting system for the use of industrial process cooling water. The applicant shall outline how the proposed data centres will be cooled and how harvested rainwater will be treated and clarify the frequency and volume of process cooling water required as part of the development. The applicant shall also submit a drawing showing the layout of proposed process cooling network in relation to proposed stormwater and wastewater drainage networks. Process cooling water shall not be discharged post treatment to the surface water drainage or local watercourse network without prior Section 4 trade effluent discharge licence consent from the Local Authority under the Water Pollution Act 1977. Alternatively, the applicant shall require a Section 16 trade effluent discharge licence consent from Uisce Eireann under the Water Pollution Act 1977 if applying to discharge process cooling water to the public wastewater drainage network. Rainwater Harvesting is welcomed by Kildare County Council as part of Sustainable Drainage design proposals.

Reason: To ensure proper and sustainable servicing of the proposed development and to prevent pollution.

34. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall carry out and submit a design health and safety risk assessment for the proposed pond areas for the written approval of the planning authority. Refer to Kildare County Council's Sustainable Drainage Design Guidance document for guidance on Health and Safety guidance for pond areas and how to design safely in open areas without the need for fencing measures. The applicant shall ensure

landscape and engineering design proposals are correlated in this regard. Cross and longitudinal sections of all proposed ponds shall be submitted as part of the above-mentioned design risk assessment.

Reason: To ensure proper and sustainable servicing of the proposed development and to ensure health and safety has been adequately implemented into surface water drainage design

35. Prior to commencement of development the applicant shall obtain written agreement from the Office of Public Works (OPW) for Section 50 consent to construct proposed Bluebell Stream emergency access crossing. The applicant shall submit written agreement from the OPW to the Planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: To ensure proper approvals / consents are obtained from relevant statutory bodies and to prevent flooding.

36. Only clean uncontaminated surface water from the development shall be discharged to the surface water system. Only foul sewage and soiled water from the development shall be discharged to the foul system.

Reason: In the interests of public health, to avoid pollution and to ensure proper servicing of the development

37. No works shall take place until a scheme to minimise the risk of offsite flooding caused by surface water run-off and groundwater during construction works and prevent pollution has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented as approved.

Reason: To prevent flooding and in the interests of sustainable drainage.

38. All surface water outfalls to the Bluebell stream shall include a non-return valve. Details of same shall be submitted for the written agreement of the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: To ensure proper servicing of the development and to prevent flooding.

39. All works shall comply with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works.

Reason: To ensure proper servicing of the development and to ensure mandatory design standards are complied with.

Environment

40. All overground oil, chemical storage tank(s) shall be adequately bunded to protect against spillage. Bunding shall be impermeable and capable of retaining a volume equal to 1.1 times the capacity of the largest tank. Filling and offtake points shall be located within the bund.

Reason: In the interest of public health and the use of best practice guidelines in order to avoid pollution.

41. Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant shall prepare a Construction and Demolition Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) in accordance with Appendix C of the "EPA Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for C&D Projects (2021)" including demonstration of proposals to adhere to best practice and protocols. The RWMP shall include specific proposals as to how the RWMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness, these details shall be placed on the file and retained as part of the public record. The RWMP shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.

42. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall clarify how the processed cooling water will be treated and discharged. If the discharge of processed cooling water, from the development is to the public foul sewer system, an Effluent Discharge Licence under the Water Services Act 2007 shall be obtained from Irish Water. If the applicant proposes to discharge processed cooling water from the development into the surface water network or local watercourse, the applicant shall obtain a Section 4 Effluent Discharge Licence under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended from Kildare County Council.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution, and to ensure proper development

43. Noise from the operational stages of the planned development shall not give rise to sound pressure levels (Leq 15 minutes) measured at noise sensitive locations which exceed the following limits: a. 55 dB(A) between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday inclusive (excluding bank holidays) and 45 dB(A) at any other time, and b. There shall be no clearly audible tonal component or impulsive component in the noise emission from the development at any noise sensitive location. A detailed Noise Study, with recommendations, shall be carried out by a competent noise/environmental consultant within three months of the development being in full operation and at any other time as may be specified by Kildare Co. Council. The Noise Study shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution, and to ensure proper development.

44. A Noise Survey of the site operations shall be carried out annually by a competent Environmental Consultant in accordance with a plan to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to commencement of operations. A record of the survey results shall be available for inspection by any authorised persons of the Planning Authority, at all reasonable times.

Reason: In the interest of public health, and the use of best practice guidelines in order to avoid nuisance.

45. The developer shall use "Best Practicable Means" to prevent/minimise noise and dust emissions during the construction and operational phases of the development, through the provision and proper maintenance, use and operation of all machinery all to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of public health, and the use of best practice guidelines in order to avoid nuisance

46. All surface water from the carpark areas shall pass through adequately sized and sited petrol/oil interceptor(s) before being discharged to the surface water system. A log of the maintenance of the interceptors (to include dates and invoices) shall be kept on the premises and made available for inspection by council officials.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution, and to ensure proper development.

47. Any importation of waste Soil & Stone for the purposes of land-raising or landscaping shall have prior authorisation under Section 39 of the Waste Management 1996, (as amended). Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall outline in detail their proposals in this regard, and no development shall commence until such time as when their waste importation plan has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of public health and the use of best practice guidelines in order to avoid pollution.

48. Prior to Commencement Notice Stage, the developer shall submit a Construction Phase Surface Water Management Plan in accordance with IFI Publication 2016 "Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works in and Adjacent to Waters" for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The Plan shall address the collection, control and management of any surface water run-off from the site to prevent any polluting matter, suspended solids and silt, being discharged to any receiving water. The Plan shall, inter alia, include: (a) Site Layout Plan at sufficient scale identifying any potential surface water and/or groundwater receptors; (b) The location and design of any proposed mitigation measures; and (c) Proposals for a surface water and/or groundwater monitoring programme, as appropriate.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution, and to ensure proper development.

49. If a discharge to waters of any silt laden water is proposed as part of the Surface Water Management plan for either the development or the operational stages of the proposal; the Environment Section shall be consulted as such a discharge can only be authorised under Section 4 of the Local Government

(Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended. All to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution, and to ensure proper development

50. An Industrial Emissions Licence (IEL) from the EPA in order to operate should be sought and obtained, and this licence will strictly regulate all potential polluting emissions arising from the proposed development. No operations shall commence within the proposed development until such time as when an IEL has been issued by the EPA. A copy of this IEL shall be supplied for the written agreement of the Planning Authority immediately following receipt by the applicant and prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution and to ensure proper development.

51. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall submit detailed proposals on how the pump stations will be operated and maintained by the Facilities Management Company to ensure performance, for the written agreement of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of public health, to avoid pollution, and to ensure proper development.

Roads

52. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit construction stage design drawings of the submitted Donnachadh O'Brien & Associates Consulting Engineer's "Proposed R409 Road VRU Improvement Works" drawing number: 2232-DOB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1600, "Proposed R409 Road Surface Water Drainage Layout" drawing number: 2232-DOB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-0220 and the "Proposed R409 Road VRU Improvement Sections" drawing number: 2232-DOB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1601 received by the Planning Authority on the 23rd June 2025 pertaining to the cycle track, footpath, shared surfaces and bus stop alignment. These drawings shall be agreed in with the Planning Authority (in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)).

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety, proper planning and sustainable development.

53. Prior to the commencement of development, the Developer shall submit for the written agreement of the Planning Authority, a construction stage Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) based on the recommendations and methodologies of the submitted HDR Construction Traffic Management Plan Document Number: 10360452-HDR-XX-XX-RP-T-000002 dated 19th June 2025 received by the Planning Authority on the 23rd June 2025. This plan shall include:

- a. Final construction haul routes to and from the development site to include the national road network, including the movement of occasional abnormal loads (ALs).
 - b. Lane closures and the methodology for the safe movements of vulnerable road users.
 - c. Relevant construction site warning signs shall be in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) Traffic Signs Manual.
 - d. Record of technical approval by TII of the works proposed to the R409 overbridge (Eirspan Name Naas Road Bridge, Structure ID KE-M07-031.00) in accordance with TII Publications.
 - e. Commitment to and methodology for, the preparation and submission of, a postconstruction survey along the boundary of the application site that also records extents of the MMarC Area A.
 - f. Detailed information on traffic management, including signage (static and VMS) to ensure the strategic function of the national road network is protected. d) details of future access and maintenance arrangements for the proposed surface water drainage run.
 - g. Record of consultation with (MMaRC) Maintenance Area A Contractor, via TII and the relevant road authority Kildare County Council.
 - h. Confirmation that the works will not impact TII Structures following consultation with structures@tii.ie email.
 - i. Record of works specific indemnities, consent and arrangements for third party access as arise following consultation with thirdpartyworks@tii.ie
- This plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority (in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)).

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety, proper planning and sustainable development.

54. Prior to the commencement of development, the Developer shall submit to the Planning Authority a construction stage Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) based on the recommendations and methodologies of the submitted Construction Environmental Management Plan Document Number: 10360452-HDR-XX-XX-RP-T-000001 dated the 19th June 2025 received by the Planning Authority on the 23rd June 2025. This plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority (in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)).

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.

55. All works involving the opening of public roads or footpaths shall be carried out under a Road Opening Licence submitted to the Naas Municipal District Area Office through the MRL system to ensure the following items are assessed:

- a) Contractor's experience and competency to carry out such works.
- b) Compliance with the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (The Purple book, 2017 edition).
- c) Compliance with Chapter 8 of Traffic Management Guidelines including a general assessment of traffic impacts within the local area.
- d) Relevant Insurance's to carry out such works.

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety, proper planning and sustainable development.

56. A full time Resident Engineer shall be provided and funded by the Developer to supervise the road works on the R409 Regional Road. The appointment of a full time Residential Engineer shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: Full time supervision of the works is deemed to be necessary given the scale and extent of these works and the potential traffic disruption on the R409 Regional Road.

57. The Developer shall act as client for the purposes of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 (within the meaning of that term as therein defined) for the road works on the R409 Regional Road.

Reason: In the interest of proper health and safety management for the project.

58. Prior to commencement of development, the Developer shall submit for the written agreement of the Planning Authority, the names and contact details, in writing, of the Project Supervisor for the Design Process and the Project Supervisor for the Construction Stage for the road works on the R409 Regional Road, as appointed under the Safety Health & Welfare (Construction) Regulations, 2013, or any preceding Regulations, to the KCC Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department.

Reason: The KCC Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department requires this information so that any complaints or queries received about the project, particularly in relation to road traffic matters, can be forwarded to the appropriate person.

59. The Developer shall liaise with the KCC Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department in relation to the procurement of a competent contractor to carry out the road works on the R409 Regional Road. The procurement of a

competent contractor shall be the subject of the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: The KCC Transport, Mobility and Open Spaces Department is responsible to ensure that a reputable and competent contractor is employed to carry out the road works on the R409 Regional Road.

60. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall engage in writing (through the Planning Authority) with the Naas Municipal District Engineer and shall arrange for necessary inspections to be carried out on the roads in the vicinity of the site and shall address issues of road deterioration due to heavy construction traffic.

Reason: It is considered appropriate that the developer should carry out repair work to roads in the area, to which damage has been caused as a direct result of heavy construction traffic serving the development. It is important in that regard that the Naas Municipal District Engineer be involved in inspections carried out.

61. Prior to the commencement of development, the Developer shall obtain a licence for the erection of fencing / hoarding on the public footpath network pursuant to Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian and traffic safety, proper planning and sustainable development.

62. The outdoor lighting scheme, except where detailed in other conditions of this permission, shall be carried out in accordance with the Lighting Assessment Report Document Number: 10360452-HDR-XX-XX-RP-E-630001 dated the 12th June 2025 received by the Planning Authority on the 23rd June 2025 and with the Kildare County Council Lighting Policy Street Lighting Technical Specification (04/06/2019), (where applicable). The Developer shall comply with all future site lighting requirements of the Planning Authority in relation to adjusting the lights by re-aiming, the addition of louvres & shields and / or dimming. This is to deal with any glare issues that may arise for road users, residents and adjacent lands / properties which may only become apparent when the installation has been commissioned. The outdoor lighting scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of the development.

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety, proper planning and sustainable development.

63. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the "Glint and Glare Assessment" as contained in Appendix 11.5 of RPS Group's

"Environmental Impact Assessment Report" (EIAR) received by the Planning Authority on the 13th August 2024. The Developer shall comply with all requirements of the Planning Authority in addressing any glint and glare issues that may arise from the completed development. This is to deal with any glint and glare issues that may arise for road users, residents and adjacent lands / properties which may only become apparent when the development is completed.

Reason: In the interest safeguarding neighbouring residential amenity, pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety.

64. Prior to the commencement of development, the Developer shall submit a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit to the Planning Authority. Prior to the opening and operation of the development, the Developer shall submit to the Planning Authority a Stage 3 Road Safety Audit to Kildare County Council. Within 180 days of the opening and operation of the development, the Developer shall complete and submit a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit to the Planning Authority. These Road Safety Audits shall be the subject of the written agreement of the Planning Authority (in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)).

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular safety, proper planning and sustainable development.

65. No surface water runoff from the development shall discharge onto the public road network, its footpath and verges.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety.

66. The development shall not impair existing land or road drainage.

Reason: To prevent interference with existing land or road drainage in the interest of proper development.

67. Prior to commencement of development, a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) including a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted for the written agreement of the planning authority subject to the written agreement of TII which shall include:

a) record of technical approval by TII of the works proposed to the R409 overbridge (Eirspan Name Naas Road Bridge, Structure ID KE-M07-031.00) in accordance with TII Publications.

b) commitment to and methodology for, the preparation and submission of, a post-construction survey along the boundary of the application site that also records extents of the MMaRC Area A.

c) detailed information on traffic management, including signage (static and VMS) to ensure the strategic function of the national road network is protected.

- d) details of future access and maintenance arrangements for the proposed surface water drainage run.
- e) record of consultation with (MMaRC) Maintenance Area A Contractor, via TII and the relevant road authority Kildare County Council.
- f) confirmation that the works will not impact TII Structures following consultation with structures@tii.ie email; and
- g) record of works specific indemnities, consent and arrangements for third party access as arise following consultation with thirdpartyworks@tii.ie.

Reason: To safeguard the safety and capacity of national road infrastructure.

68. a) Prior to the commencement of development / works the developer shall submit (for the attention of KCC NRO Bridge Management) detailed design proposals for all works on or adjacent to the M7, Caragh Road Overbridge (KE-M07-031.00) for the written agreement of the Planning Authority. their review and approval.
- b) All proposed works to the M7, Caragh Road Overbridge shall be designed in accordance with TII Publications (Standards).
- c) No works shall commence on the M7, Caragh Road Overbridge (KE-M07-031.00) without the prior approval of KCC NRO Bridge Management section of the Planning Authority.
- d) Road Safety Audits in accordance with TII Publication GE-STY-01024 shall be undertaken and submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority.
- e) Upon completion of all site works associated with the M7, Caragh Overbridge, as-built drawings for same shall be submitted to the written agreement of the Planning Authority for attention of KCC NRO.

Reason: In the interest of road safety and the protection of the national road network.

Fire Safety

69. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant shall submit, for the written agreement of the Planning Authority an updated Fire Hazard Analysis.

Reason: In the interest of Fire Safety.

70. In addition to the static water storage proposed on site (Pond 2), firefighting water supply of at least 35 litres per second for 60 minutes at 2 bar or greater shall be available from hydrants on a watermain.

Reason: In the interest of Fire Safety

71. The Applicant shall obtain Fire Safety Certificates in accordance with the requirements of the Building Control Act.

Reason: In the interest of Fire Safety

Uisce Eireann

72. a) The applicant/operator shall comply with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan objectives to ensure that the development will not negatively impact on the water quality of source/receiving waters during both construction and operational phases.
- b). The applicant/operator shall meet the requirements of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU.
- c) The applicant/operator shall comply with the requirements of the Groundwater Directive, Article 6(1) of Directive 2000/60/EC.
- d). The applicant shall ensure there is no deterioration in surface and ground water quality as a result of any pre-construction works and/or the operation of and/or the decommissioning of the development as proposed.
- e). The applicant shall ensure that there will be no negative impact to any of UÉ's Groundwater Source(s) which may be in proximity to the development during construction, operational phases and/or any decommissioning and/or remediation of lands, arising from the development to ensure compliance with the Groundwater Directive (80/68/EEC).
- f). In the interest of Public Health and Environmental Sustainability the applicant/operator shall comply with best practice Groundwater Protection Schemes set in the GSI Groundwater Protection Schemes.
- g). In the interest of Public Health and Environmental Sustainability, Uisce Éireann Infrastructure capacity requirements and proposed connections to the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure shall be subject to the constraints of the Uisce Éireann Capital Investment Programme.
- h). In relation to Wastewater the current Pre-Connection Enquiry shall only be valid to a maximum discharging load of 5 litres per second during the cooling event. If the applicant requires to discharge a greater flow in the future, the applicant shall re-apply for a new PreConnection Enquiry for further assessment.
- i). In relation to Water, the current Pre-Connection Enquiry shall only validate a water usage for the proposed development of 1.3 litres per second. If the applicant requires a greater water flow in the future, to facilitate the development, then the applicant shall submit an updated Pre-Connection Enquiry for further assessment.
- j). Where the applicant proposes to connect to a public water/wastewater network operated by Uisce Éireann, the applicant shall sign a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann prior to the commencement of the development and adhere to the standards and conditions set out in that agreement. This shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.
- k). All development shall be carried out in compliance with Uisce Éireann Standards codes and practices.
- l). Separation distances as per Uisce Éireann's standards, codes and practices shall be achieved in respect to Uisce Éireann infrastructure within and/or adjacent to the site to ensure appropriate protection and access to same.
- m) Design and construction shall be progressed so as not to impact on Uisce Éireann Infrastructure

Reason: To ensure proper servicing of the development and to ensure the adequate provision of water and wastewater facilities.

73. (a) The permitted hours of operation during the construction phase and for construction related deliveries and collections shall be between 07.00 hours to 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 hours to 14.00 hours on Saturdays. Work is not permitted on Sundays and on public holidays. Any deviation from these times shall only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

(b) Noise from the construction stages of the development shall not give rise to sound pressure levels (Leq 15 minutes) measured at noise sensitive locations which exceed 70 dB(A) (LAeq 1 hour) between 07.00 hours and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday inclusive (excluding bank holidays) and between 08.00 hours and 14.00 hours on Saturdays when measured at any noise sensitive location in the vicinity of the site. If changes are agreed in writing with the Planning Authority to the construction hours as per (a) above, the noise levels shall align with same. Sound levels from site development works shall not exceed 45 dB(A) (LAeq 1 hour) at any other time.

Reason: (a) In order to safeguard residential amenity of properties in the area
(b) in the interest of public health, to avoid noise pollution, and to ensure proper development.

74. During construction the developer shall provide adequate off carriageway parking facilities for all traffic associated with the proposed development. This shall include material delivery vehicles, service vehicles, construction plant, materials and vehicles, waste skips and private vehicles of the workers on site. There shall be no unauthorised parking of vehicles or storage of construction related items on the public road network.

Reason: In the interest of traffic safety.

75. No spoil, dirt, debris or other materials shall be deposited on the public road, footpath or verge by machinery or vehicles travelling to or from the development site during construction phase. The Developer shall arrange for vehicles leaving the site to be kept clean, and for road sweeping by mechanical sweeper to take place as required.

Reason: To ensure that public areas adjacent the development are kept in a suitably clean state of repair during construction works

76. This permission shall not be construed as any form of consent or agreement to connections to the national grid or to the natural gas network. No development shall take place on site until such time as consents for connection to the national grid and natural gas network have been received.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and orderly development.

Levies as applicable – Data Centre 153,767 sq m (revised by FI) Demolition of 3 no. habitable dwellings total 1591 sq m.

~~EHO – Separate Letter – please strike out conditions regarding hours of activities as these are covered in above conditions.~~ *July*

Fiona Breen

Fiona Breen
Executive Planner

18/08/2025

Tracy McGibbon

Tracy McGibbon
Senior Executive Planner
19/08/2025

Signed:

S. Willoughby

S. Willoughby
Senior Planner

19/08/2025

Chief Executive Statement

Ref 24/60787

It is considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) presented by the Executive Planner in report dated 18/08/2025 and approved by the Senior Executive Planner and Senior Planner, has been carried out giving full consideration to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and EIAR Addendum and all plans and other particulars received by the Planning Authority on the 13/08/2024 and amended by revised documentation received on 23/06/2025, all Kildare County Council internal department reports, and all submissions and observations received from prescribed bodies and third parties made in relation to the environmental effects of the proposed development.

It is considered that the EIAR received on the 13/08/2024 and EIAR Addendum received on 23/06/2025 to assesses the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development on the environment and thereby complies with the requirements of Article 5(1) of EIA Directive 2014/52/EU and the potential impacts on:

- Biodiversity
- Lands and Soils
- Water and Hydrology
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape and Visual
- Traffic and Transportation
- Material Assets – Built Services
- Population Human Health
- Climate Change

The EIAR submitted with this application is deemed to adequately describe the direct, indirect and cumulative effects on the environment of the proposed development, together with proposals to avoid, mitigate and reduce environmental impacts of the proposed development. A thorough Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken by the Planning Authority.

Signed:

Annette Aspell
Deputy Chief Executive